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*Extract from a Letter written by Mr. Arnold to his
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"Returning from a journey in Egypt, I find more than one kind and important letter from you. Let me, before answering them, thank you most warmly for the spirit of these and all your communications, and tell you with what pride and pleasure I have learned of the magnificent reception given to my 'Light of Asia' by the American public, not less through your own appreciative and generous enterprise than its own merits.

"Nothing could have given me profounder pleasure than the favor shown me thus by the transatlantic English, and I hope some day to make suitable acknowledgment of the immense distinction conferred on me by your public.

"EDWIN ARNOLD."

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POEMS.

By EDWIN ARNOLD,

AUTHOR OF "THE LIGHT OF ASIA."

*WITH A PREFACE WRITTEN FOR THIS EDITION
BY THE AUTHOR.*



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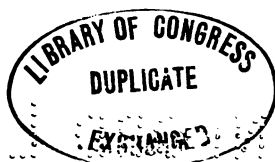
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PREFACE.

THE gracious reception given to my "Light of Asia" by the American people, — which has so much honored me — encourages my publishers, Messrs. Roberts Brothers, to reproduce here such other poetical works of mine as they think likely to be of interest in America. I am glad of the opportunity thus afforded to express the pleasure and the pride caused me by the high favour of the public of the United States; and to thank with all my heart the innumerable unknown, but valued, friends there, who have been pleased to convey to me, by public and private channels, the satisfaction they have found in my story of "The Great Renunciation."

EDWIN ARNOLD.

LONDON, August 13, 1880.

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PREFACE TO THE INDIAN SONG OF SONGS.

BEAUTIFUL flowers please, whatever their name and country; and so far as any brightness or fragrance may have been preserved from the Aryan original in this paraphrase, it will no doubt be recognized by the reader of intelligence. Yet being so exotic, the poem demands a word or two of introduction.

The "Gita Govinda," then, or "Song of Govind," is a Sanskrit idyl, or little pastoral drama, in which — under the form of KRISHNA, an incarnation of the god Vishnoo — the human soul is displayed in its relations alternately with earthly and celestial beauty. Krishna — at once human and divine — is first seen attracted by the pleasures of the senses (personified by the shepherdesses in the wood), and wasting his affections upon the delights of their illusory world. RADHA, the spirit of intellectual and moral beauty, comes to free him from this error by enkindling in his heart a desire for her own surpassing loveliness of form and character; and under the parable of a human passion — too glowingly depicted by the Indian poet for exact transcription — the gradual emancipation of Krishna from sensuous distrac-

tions, and his union with Radha in a high and spiritualized happiness, are portrayed. This general interpretation, at any rate, though disputed by certain authorities, is maintained by Jones, Lassen, and others; and has been followed, not without occasional difficulty, in the subjoined version.

Lassen thus writes in his Latin *prolegomena*: "To speak my opinion in one word, Krishna is here the divinely-given soul manifested in humanity. . . . The recollection of this celestial origin abides deep in the mind, and even when it seems to slumber—drugged as it were by the fair shows of the world, the pleasures of visible things, and the intoxication of the senses—it now and again awakes, . . . full of yearning to recover the sweet serenity of its pristine condition. Then the soul begins to discriminate and to perceive that the love, which was its inmost principle, has been lavished on empty and futile objects; it grows a-wearied of things sensual, false, and unenduring; it longs to fix its affection on that which shall be stable, and the source of true and eternal delight. Krishna—to use the imagery of this poem—thrones Radha in his heart, as the sole and only one who can really satisfy his aspirations. . . .

"Radha is supreme in beauty, with a loveliness which is at once celestial, and yet enshrined in earthly mould. Her charms lift the mind to heavenly contemplations, and the God of Love, Kama, borrows his best weapons from them. She is forgiving and pitiful even towards her erring and lingering lover; she would meet him in returning if she could; she grieves more than she blames; and once reconciled, is beyond measure tender. . . . The remedy for the illusions of sense—*sansāra*—is placed by all Hindoo philosophers in the understanding of true existence, and Radha, in my

judgment, represents this remedy—being the personified contemplation of the divine beauty and goodness. . . . Such contemplation flies from and disowns the mind possessed by sensual objects, but goes to meet and gladly inhabits that which consecrates itself, as Krishna's does, to the higher love. . . . It bewails its separation from the soul, as that which was its natural dwelling-place before the changeful shows of mortal life banished it; and this is the mystery of mutual attraction between the mind and mental beauty, that the memory of the divine happiness does not die, but is revived by the recognition of truth, and returns to the perception of what things in love are worthless, and what are real and worthy. The affection of Radha is jealous, and grants not the full sight of her charms, until the soul of its own accord abandons its preoccupations, and becomes filled with the desire of the true love. But upon the soul thus returning she lavishes her utmost tenderness; whereof to be the recipient is to have all wishes fulfilled and nothing lacking—to be *tripta*—‘well-contented.’ Such, in my opinion, is the recondite significance of this poem, hidden under imagery but too luxuriant. The Indian poet seems, indeed, to have spent rather more labor in depicting the phases of earthly passion than of that intellectual yearning by which the mind is lifted to the contemplation of divine things; . . . but the fable of the loves of Govinda and Radha existing from antiquity, and being universally accepted, philosophy had to affix its doctrines to the story in such a way as that the vulgar amours of those popular deities might present themselves in a nobler aspect.”

Nothing in the way of exposition needs to be added to these words.

The great variety of measure in the original has been indicated by frequently varying the metre of this paraphrase, without meanwhile attempting to imitate the many very fanciful alliterations, assonances, and recurring choruses; of which last, however, two examples have been introduced. The "Gīta Govinda," with these *refrains* and the musical accompaniments named and prescribed by the directions embodied in the text, must have been a species of Oriental opera. This raises the difficult and little-studied subject of ancient Hindoo music, upon which a passing word or two may not appear impertinent. Sir William Jones says, "When I first read the songs of Jayadeva, who has prefixed to each the name of the mode in which it was to be sung, I had hopes of procuring the original music; but the Pundits of the South referred me to those of the West, and the Brahmans of the West would have sent me to those of the North, while they of Nepal and Cashmere declared that they had no ancient music, but imagined that the notes of the 'Gīta Govinda' must exist, if anywhere, where the poet was born" (Sir W. Jones, vol. i. p. 440).

Now the reason why this illustrious scholar could not find the score of the "Gīta," was that music was always taught orally by the Hindoos, and therefore did not pass down from the old minstrels in any noted form. Yet there existed an elaborate science of melody among the ancient Indians; although, like the Greeks, they understood little or nothing of harmony. The distinguishing feature of Hindoo airs was, and still is, an extremely fine gradation of notes; the semitone could be accurately divided into demi-semi-tones by the ear and voice of a practised "Gundharb" or "Goonee." This even now imparts a delicacy to the otherwise mono-

tonous temple-singing, which all musicians would recognize ; and they might find in such treatises as the "Sungeet Durpun," "Ragavibodha," and "Râg-mala," or "Chaplet of Melodies," complete and curious explanations of the Hindoo orchestra. In that fantastic system the old Aryan composers established six *ragas*, or divine fundamental airs, having each five wives or *raginees*, and each of these producing eight melodious children ; so that the orthodox repertory contained two hundred and forty separate songs. These songs had their fixed occasion, subject, and season ; all to be reverently observed ; otherwise the deity presiding over each was not thought likely to attend and give perfect effect to the music. These lyric divinities are personified and described in such works as the "Ratnamala:" thus "Gurjjari" — a melody frequently indicated here by Jayadeva — is represented as a feminine minstrel of engaging mien, dressed in yellow bodice and red *saree*, richly bedecked with jewels and enthroned in a golden swing, as the third wife of the *Raga Megh*. Musical science was divided into seven branches — *Surudhyaya* or sol-fa-ing, *rag* or melody, *tal* or time, *nrît* or rhythmical dancing, *aurth* or poetry, *bhav* or expression, and *hust*, answering to method, "touch." The gamut contained seven notes singularly named — *Su* was *suruj*, the scream of the peacock ; *ri* was *rikhub*, the cry of the parrot ; *gu* was *gundhur*, the bleat of the sheep ; *mu* was *muddhun*, the call of the crane ; *pu* stood for *punchum*, and the note of the Koil ; *dhu* for *dhyvut*, the neigh of the horse ; and *ni* for *nikhad*, the trumpeting of the elephant. Endless subtleties characterized their musical terms — thus *tal*, or "time," is a word made up of the first letters from *tand*, the dance of Mahadeo, and *las*, the dance of Parvati, his consort ; but

THE INDIAN SONG OF SONGS.

INTRODUCTION.

OM !

REVERENCE TO GANESHA !

“THE sky is clouded ; and the wood resembles
The sky, thick-arched with black Tamâla boughs ;
O Radha, Radha ! take this Soul, that trembles
In life's deep midnight, to Thy golden house.”
So Nanda spoke, — and, led by Radha's spirit,
The feet of Krishna found the road aright ;
Wherefore in bliss which all high hearts inherit
Together taste they Love's divine delight.

*He who wrote these things for thee,
Of the Son of Wassoodee,*

*Was the poet Jayadeva ;
Him Saraswati gave ever
Fancies fair his mind to throng,
Like pictures palace-walls along ;
Ever to his notes of love
Lakshmi's mystic dancers move.
If thy spirit seeks to brood
On Hari glorious, Hari good ;
If it feeds on solemn numbers
Dim as dreams and soft as slumbers,
Lend thine ear to Jayadev,
Lord of all the spells that save.
Umapatidhara's strain
Glows like roses after rain ;
Sharan's stream-like song is grand,
If its tide ye understand ;
Bard more wise beneath the sun
Is not found than Govardhun ;
Dhoyi holds the listener still
With his shlokes of subtle skill ;
But for sweet words suited well
Jayadeva doth excel.*

(*What follows is to the Music MĀLAVA and the Mode
RUPAKA.*)

HYMN TO VISHNU.

O THOU that held'st the blessed Veda dry
When all things else beneath the floods were hurled ;
Strong Fish-God ! Ark of Men ! *Jai ! Hari, jai !*
Hail, Keshav, hail ! thou Master of the world !

The round world rested on thy spacious nape ;
Upon thy neck, like a mere mole, it stood :
O thou that took'st for us the Tortoise-shape,
Hail, Keshav, hail ! Ruler of wave and wood !

The world upon thy curving tusk sate sure,
Like the Moon's dark disc in her crescent pale ;
O thou who didst for us assume the Boar,
Immortal Conqueror ! hail, Keshav, hail !

When thou thy Giant-Foe didst seize and rend,
Fierce, fearful, long, and sharp were fang and nail ;
Thou who the Lion and the Man didst blend,
Lord of the Universe ! hail, Narsingh, hail !

Wonderful Dwarf ! — who with a threefold stride
 Cheated King Bali — where thy footsteps fall
Men's sins, O Wamuna ! are set aside.
 O Keshav, hail ! thou Help and Hope of all !

The sins of this sad earth thou didst assoil,
 The anguish of its creatures thou didst heal ;
Freed are we from all terrors by thy toil :
 Hail, Purshuram, hail ! Lord of the biting steel !

To thee the fell Ten-Headed yielded life,
 Thou in dread battle laid'st the monster low !
Ah, Rama ! dear to Gods and men that strife ;
 We praise thee, Master of the matchless bow !

With clouds for garments glorious thou dost fare,
 Veiling thy dazzling majesty and might,
As when Yamuna saw thee with the share,
 A peasant — yet the King of Day and Night.

Merciful-hearted ! when thou camest as Boodh —
 Albeit 'twas written in the Scriptures so —
Thou bad'st our altars be no more imbrued
 With blood of victims : Keshav ! bending low

We praise thee, Wielder of the sweeping sword,
Brilliant as curving comets in the gloom,
Whose edge shall smite the fierce barbarian horde ;
Hail to thee, Keshav ! hail, and hear, and come,

And fill this song of Jayadev with thee,
And make it wise to teach, strong to redeem,
And sweet to living souls. Thou Mystery !
Thou Light of Life ! Thou Dawn beyond the dream !

Fish ! that didst outswim the flood ;
Tortoise ! whereon earth hath stood ;
Boar ! who with thy tush held'st high
The world, that mortals might not die ;
Lion ! who hast giants torn ;
Dwarf ! who laugh'dst a king to scorn ;
Sole Subduer of the Dreaded !
Slayer of the many-headed !
Mighty Ploughman ! Teacher tender !
Of thine own the sure Defender !
Under all thy ten disguises
Endless praise to thee arises.

(*What follows is to the Music GURJJARÎ and the Mode
NIHSÂRA.*)

Endless praise arises,
O thou God that liest
Rapt, on Kumla's breast,
Happiest, holiest, highest !
Planets are thy jewels,
Stars thy forehead-gems,
Set like sapphires gleaming
In kingliest anadems ;
Even the great gold Sun-God,
Blazing through the sky,
Serves thee but for crest-stone,
Jai, jai ! Hari, jai !
As that Lord of day
After night brings morrow,
Thou dost charm away
Life's long dream of sorrow.
As on Mansa's water
Brood the swans at rest,
So thy laws sit stately
On a holy breast.

O, Drinker of the poison !
Ah, high Delight of earth !
What light is to the lotus-buds,
What singing is to mirth,
Art thou — art thou that slayedst
Madhou and Narak grim ;
That ridest on the King of Birds,
Making all glories dim.
With eyes like open lotus-flowers,
Bright in the morning rain,
Freeing by one swift piteous glance
The spirit from Life's pain :
Of all the three Worlds Treasure !
Of sin the Putter-by !
Of the Ten-Headed Victor !
Jai Hari ! Hari ! *jai* !
Thou Shaker of the Mountain !
Thou Shadow of the Storm !
Thou Cloud that unto Lakshmi's face
Comes welcome, white, and warm !
O thou, — who to great Lakshmi
Art like the silvery beam
Which moon-sick chakors feed upon

By Jumna's silent stream, —
To thee this hymn ascendeth,
That Jayadev doth sing,
Of worship, love, and mystery ;
High Lord and heavenly King !
And unto whoso hears it
Do thou a blessing bring —
Whose neck is gilt with yellow dust
From lilies that did cling
Beneath the breasts of Lakshmi,
A girdle soft and sweet,
When in divine embracing
The lips of Gods did meet ;
And the beating heart above
Of thee — Dread Lord of Heaven ! —
She left that stamp of love —
By such deep sign be given
Prays Jayadev, the glory
And the secret and the spells
Which close-hid in this story
Unto wise ears he tells.

END OF INTRODUCTION.

SARGA THE FIRST.



SAMODADAMODARO.

THE SPORTS OF KRISHNA.

BEAUTIFUL Radha, jasmine-bosomed Radha,
All in the Spring-time waited by the wood
For Krishna fair, Krishna the all-forgetful, —
Krishna with earthly love's false fire consuming —
And some one of her maidens sang this song : —

*(What follows is to the Music VASANTA and the Mode
YATI.)*

I know where Krishna tarries in these early days of
Spring,
When every wind from warm Malay brings fragrance on
its wing ;

Brings fragrance stolen far away from thickets of the
 clove,

In jungles where the bees hum and the Koil flutes her
 love ;

He dances with the dancers, of a merry morrice one,
All in the budding Spring-time, for 'tis sad to be alone.

I know how Krishna passes these hours of blue and gold,
When parted lovers sigh to meet and greet and closely
 hold

Hand fast in hand ; and every branch upon the Vakul-
 tree

Droops downward with a hundred blooms, in every bloom
 a bee ;

He is dancing with the dancers to a laughter-moving
 tone,

In the soft awakening Spring-time, when 'tis hard to live
 alone.

Where Kroona-flowers, that open at a lover's lightest
 tread,

Break, and, for shame at what they hear, from white blush
 modest red ;

And all the spears on all the boughs of all the Ketuk-
glades

Seem ready darts to pierce the hearts of wandering youths
and maids ;

'Tis there thy Krishna dances till the merry drum is done,
All in the sunny Spring-time, when who can live alone ?

Where the breaking-forth of blossom on the yellow
Keshra-sprays

Dazzles like Kama's sceptre, whom all the world obeys ;
And Pâtal-buds fill drowsy bees from pink delicious
bowls,

As Kama's nectared goblet steeps in languor human
souls ;

There he dances with the dancers, and of Radha thinketh
none,

All in the warm new Spring-tide, when none will live
alone.

Where the breath of waving Mâdhvi pours incense
through the grove,

And silken Mogras lull the sense with essences of
love,—

The silken-soft pale Mogra, whose perfume fine and faint
Can melt the coldness of a maid, the sternness of a
saint —

There dances with those dancers thine other self, thine
Own,
All in the languorous Spring-time, when none will live
alone.

Where — as if warm lips touched sealed eyes and waked
them — all the bloom

Opens upon the mangoes to feel the sunshine come ;
And Atimuktas wind their arms of softest green about,
Clasping the stems, while calm and clear great Jumna
spreadeth out ;

There dances and there laughs thy Love, with damsels
many an one,
In the rosy days of Spring-time, for he will not live
alone.

*Mark this song of Jayadev !
Deep as pearl in ocean-wave
Lurketh in its lines a wonder
Which the wise alone will ponder :*

*Though it seemeth of the earth,
Heavenly is the music's birth ;
Telling darkly of delights
In the wood, of wasted nights,
Of witless days, and fruitless love,
And false pleasures of the grove,
And rash passions of the prime,
And those dances of Spring-time ;
Time, which seems so subtle-sweet,
Time, which pipes to dancing-feet,
Ah ! so softly — ah ! so sweetly —
That among those wood-maids featly
Krishna cannot choose but dance,
Letting pass life's greater chance.*

Yet the winds that sigh so
As they stir the rose,
Wake a sigh from Krishna
Wistfuller than those ;
All their faint breaths swinging
The creepers to and fro
Pass like rustling arrows
Shot from Kama's bow :

Thus among the dancers
What those zephyrs bring
Strikes to Krishna's spirit
Like a darted sting.

And all as if — far wandered —
The traveller should hear
The bird of home, the Koil,
With nest-notes rich and clear ;
And there should come one moment
A blessed fleeting dream
Of the bees among the mangoes
Beside his native stream ;
So flash those sudden yearnings,
That sense of a dearer thing,
The love and lack of Radha
Upon his soul in Spring.

Then she, the maid of Radha, spake again ;
And pointing far away between the leaves
Guided her lovely Mistress where to look,
And note how Krishna wantoned in the wood
Now with this one, now that ; his heart, her prize,

Panting with foolish passions, and his eyes
 Beaming with too much love for those fair girls—
 Fair, but not so as Radha ; and she sang

(*What follows is to the Music RÂMAGIRÎ and the Mode*
 YATI.)

See, Lady ! how thy Krishna passes these idle hours
 Decked forth in fold of woven gold, and crowned with
 forest-flowers ;
 And scented with the sandal, and gay with gems of
 price —
 Rubies to mate his laughing lips, and diamonds like his
 eyes ; —
 In the company of damsels,* who dance and sing and
 play,
 Lies Krishna laughing, toying, dreaming his Spring away.

One, with star-blossomed champâk wreathed, wooes him
 to rest his head
 On the dark pillow of her breast so tenderly outspread ;

* It will be observed that the "Gopis" here personify the five senses. Lassen says, "*Manifestum est puellis istis nil aliud significari quam res sensiles.*"

And o'er his brow with roses blown she fans a fragrance
rare,
That falls on the enchanted sense like rain in thirsty
air,
While the company of damsels wave many an odorous
spray,
And Krishna laughing, toying, sighs the soft Spring away.

Another, gazing in his face, sits wistfully apart,
Searching it with those looks of love that leap from heart
to heart ;
Her eyes — afire with shy desire, veiled by their lashes
black —
Speak so that Krishna cannot choose but send the mes-
sage back,
In the company of damsels whose bright eyes in a ring
Shine round him with soft meanings in the merry light of
Spring.

The third one of that dazzling band of dwellers in the
wood —
Body and bosom panting with the pulse of youthful
blood —

Leans over him, as in his ear a lightsome thing to
speak,

And then with leaf-soft lip imprints a kiss below his
cheek ;

A kiss that thrills, and Krishna turns at the silken touch
To give it back — ah, Radha ! forgetting thee too much.

And one with arch smile beckons him away from Jumna's
banks,

Where the tall bamboos bristle like spears in battle-
ranks,

And plucks his cloth to make him come into the mango-
shade,

Where the fruit is ripe and golden, and the milk and
cakes are laid :

Oh ! golden-red the mangoes, and glad the feasts of
Spring,

And fair the flowers to lie upon, and sweet the dancers
sing.

Sweetest of all that Temptress who dances for him now
With subtle feet which part and meet in the Râs-measure
slow,

*Holding feasts of foolish mirth
With these Visions of the earth ;
Learning love, and love imparting ;
Yet with sense of loss upstarting : —
For the cloud that veils the fountains
Underneath the Sandal mountains,
How — as if the sunshine drew
All its being to the blue —
It takes flight, and seeks to rise
High into the purer skies,
High into the snow and frost,
On the shining summits lost !
Ah ! and how the Koils' strain
Smites the traveller with pain, —
When the mango blooms in spring,
And " Koohoo," " Koohoo," they sing —
Pain of pleasures not yet won,
Pain of journeys not yet done,
Pain of toiling without gaining,
Pain, 'mid gladness, of still paining.*

But may He guide us all to glory high
Who laughed when Radha glided, hidden, by,

And all among those damsels free and bold
Touched Krishna with a soft mouth, kind and cold ;
And like the others, leaning on his breast,
Unlike the others, left there Love's unrest ;
And like the others, joining in his song,
Unlike the others, made him silent long.

*(Here ends that Sarga of the Gita Govinda entitled
SAMODADAMODARO.)*

Ah, Minstrel ! playing wrongful strains so well ;
Ah, Krishna ! Krishna, with the honeyed lip !
Ah, Wanderer into foolish fellowship !
My Dancer, my Delight ! — I love thee still.

O Dancer ! strip thy peacock-crown away,
Rise ! thou whose forehead is the star of day,
With beauty for its silver halo set ;
Come ! thou whose greatness gleams beneath its shroud
Like Indra's rainbow shining through the cloud —
Come, for I love thee, my Beloved ! yet.

Must love thee — cannot choose but love thee ever,
My best Beloved — set on this endeavor,
To win thy tender heart and earnest eye
From lips but sadly sweet, from restless bosoms,
To mine, O Krishna with the mouth of blossoms !
To mine, thou soul of Krishna ! yet I sigh

Half hopeless, thinking of myself forsaken,
And thee, dear Loiterer, in the wood o'ertaken
With passion for those bold and wanton ones,

Who knit thine arms as poison-plants gripe trees
With twining cords — their flowers the braveries
That flash in the green gloom, sparkling gauds and
stones.

My Prince ! my Lotus-faced ! my woe ! my love !
Whose broad brow, with the tilka-spot above,
Shames the bright moon at full with fleck of cloud ;
Thou to mistake so little for so much !
Thou, Krishna, to be palm to palm with such !
O Soul made for my joys, pure, perfect, proud !

Ah, my Beloved ! in thy darkness dear ;
Ah, Dancer ! with the jewels in thine ear,
Swinging to music of a loveless love ;
O my Beloved ! in thy fall so high
That angels, sages, spirits of the sky
Linger about thee, watching in the grove.

I will be patient still, and draw thee ever,
My one Beloved, sitting by the river
Under the thick Kadambas with that throng :

Will there not come an end to earthly madness?
Shall I not, past the sorrow, have the gladness?
Must not the love-light shine for him ere long?

*Shine, thou Light by Radha given,
Shine, thou splendid star of heaven !
Be a lamp to Krishna's feet,
Show to all hearts secrets sweet,
Of the wonder and the love
Jayadev hath writ above.
Be the quick Interpreter
Unto wisest ears of her
Who always sings to all, " I wait,
He loveth still who loveth late."*

For (sang on that high Lady in the shade)
My soul for tenderness, not blame, was made ;
Mine eyes look through his evil to his good ;
My heart coins pleas for him ; my fervent thought
Prevents what he will say when these are naught,
And that which I am shall be understood.

Then spake she to her maiden wistfully—

And — Love's large cup at happy overflow,
Yet ever to be filled — his eyes and mine
Shall meet in that glad look, when Time's great gate
Closes and shuts out Fate.

*Listen to the unsaid things
Of the song which Radha sings,
For the soul draws near to bliss,
As it comprehendeth this.
I am Jayadev, who write
All this subtle-rich delight
For your teaching. Ponder, then,
What it tells to Gods and men.
Err not, watching Krishna gay,
With those brown girls all at play;
Understand how Radha charms
Her wandering lover to her arms,
Waiting with divinest love
Till his dream ends in the grove.*

For even now (she sang) I see him pause,
Heart-stricken with the waste of heart he makes

Amid them ; — all the bows of their bent brows
Wound him no more : no more for all their sakes
Plays he one note upon his amorous lute,
But lets the strings lie mute.

Pensive, as if his parted lips should say —

“ My feet with the dances are weary,
The music has dropped from the song,
There is no more delight in the lute-strings,
Sweet Shadows ! what thing has gone wrong?
The wings of the wind have left fanning
The palms of the glade ;
They are dead, and the blossoms seem dying
In the place where we played.

“ We will play no more, beautiful Shadows !
A fancy came solemn and sad,
More sweet, with unspeakable longings,
Than the best of the pleasures we had :
I am not now the Krishna who kissed you ;
That exquisite dream, —
The Vision I saw in my dancing —
Has spoiled what you seem.

(*What follows is to the Music GURJJARI and the Mode*
YATI.)

Radha, Enchantress ! Radha, queen of all !

Gone — lost, because she found me sinning here ;

And I so stricken with my foolish fall,

I could not stay her out of shame and fear ;

She will not hear ;

In her disdain and grief vainly I call.

And if she heard, what would she do ? what say ?

How could I make it good that I forgot ?

What profit was it to me, night and day,

To live, love, dance, and dream, having her not ?

Soul without spot !

I wronged thy patience, till it sighed away.

Sadly I see the truth. Ah ! even now

Remembering that one look beside the river,

Softer the vexed eyes seem, and the proud brow

Than lotus-leaves when the bees make them quiver.

My love for ever !

Too late is Krishna wise — too far art thou !

Yet all day long in my deep heart I woo thee,
And all night long with thee my dreams are sweet ;
Why, then, so vainly must my steps pursue thee ?
Why can I never reach thee to entreat,
Low at thy feet,
Dear vanished Splendor ! till my tears subdue thee ?

Surpassing One ! I knew thou didst not brook
Half-hearted worship, and a love that wavers ;
Haho ! there is the wisdom I mistook,
Therefore I seek with desperate endeavors ;
That fault dissevers
Me from my heaven, astray — condemned — forsook !

And yet I seem to feel, to know, thee near me ;
Thy steps make music, measured music, near ;
Radha ! my Radha ! will not sorrow clear me ?
Shine once ! speak one word pitiful and dear !
Wilt thou not hear ?
Canst thou — because I did forget — forsake me ?

Forgive ! the sin is sinned, is past, is over ;
No thought I think shall do thee wrong again ;

Turn thy dark eyes again upon thy lover,
Bright Spirit ! or I perish of this pain.
Loving again !
In dread of doom to love, but not recover.

*So did Krishna sing and sigh
By the river-bank ; and I,
Jayadev of Kinduvilva,
Resting — as the moon of silver
Sits upon the solemn ocean —
On full faith, in deep devotion ;
Tell it that ye may perceive
How the heart must fret and grieve ;
How the soul doth tire of earth,
When the love from Heav'n hath birth.*

For (sang he on) I am no foe of thine,
There is no black snake, Kama ! in my hair ;
Blue lotus-leaves, and not the poisoned brine,
Shadow my neck ; what stains my bosom bare,
Thou God unfair !
Is sandal-dust, not ashes ; nought of mine

Makes me like Shiva that thou, Lord of Love !
Shouldst strain thy string at me and fit thy dart ;
This world is thine — let be one breast thereof
Which bleeds already, wounded to the heart
With lasting smart,
Shot from those brows that did my sin reprove.

Thou gavest her those black brows for a bow
Arched like thine own, whose pointed arrows seem
Her glances, and the underlids that go —
So firm and fine — its string? Ah, fleeting gleam !
Beautiful dream !
Small need of Kama's help hast thou, I trow,

To smite me to the soul with love ; — but set
Those arrows to their silken cord ! enchain
My thoughts in that loose hair ! let thy lips, wet
With dew of heaven as bimba-buds with rain,
Bloom precious pain
Of longing in my heart ; and, keener yet,

The heaving of thy lovely, angry bosom,
Pant to my spirit things unseen, unsaid ;

But if thy touch, thy tones, if the dark blossom
Of thy dear face, thy jasmine-odors shed
From feet to head,
If these be all with me, canst thou be far — be fled?

*So sang he, and I pray that whoso hears
The music of his burning hopes and fears,
That whoso sees this vision by the River
Of Krishna, Hari, (can we name him ever?)
And marks his ear-ring rubies swinging slow,
As he sits still, unheedful, bending low
To play this tune upon his lute, while all
Listen to catch the sadness musical;
And Krishna wotteth nought, but, with set face
Turned full toward Radha's, plays on in that place;
May all such souls — pray's Jayadev — be wise
To learn the wisdom which hereunder lies.*

*(Here ends that Sarga of the Gita Govinda entitled
MUGDHAMADHUSUDANO.)*

SARGA THE FOURTH.



SNIGDHAMADHUSUDANO.

KRISHNA CHEERED.

THEN she whom Radha sent came to the canes —
The canes beside the river where he lay
With listless limbs and spirit weak from love ; —
And she sang this to Krishna wistfully.

(*What follows is to the Music KARNÂTA and the Mode
EKATÂLĪ.*)

Art thou sick for Radha? she is sad in turn,
Heaven foregoes its blessings, if it holds not thee ;
All the cooling fragrance of sandal she doth spurn,
Moonlight makes her mournful with radiance silvery ;

Even the southern breeze blown fresh from pearly seas,
Seems to her but tainted by a dolorous brine ;
And for thy sake discontented, with a great love over-
laden,
Her soul comes here beside thee, and sitteth down with
thine.

Her soul comes here beside thee, and tenderly and true
It weaves a subtle mail of proof to ward off sin and
pain ;
A breastplate soft as lotus-leaf, with holy tears for dew,
To guard thee from the things that hurt ; and then 'tis
gone again
To strew a blissful place with the richest buds that grace
Kama's sweet world, a meeting-spot with rose and jas-
mine fair,
For the hour when, well-contented, with a love no longer
troubled,
Thou shalt find the way to Radha, and finish sorrows
there.

But now her lovely face is shadowed by her fears ;
Her glorious eyes are veiled and dim like moonlight in
eclipse

By breaking rain-clouds, Krishna ! yet she paints you in
her tears

With tender thoughts—not Krishna, but brow and
breast and lips

And form and mien a King, a great and god-like thing ;

And then with bended head she asks grace from the
Love Divine,

To keep thee discontented with the phantoms thou for-
swearest,

Till she may win her glory, and thou be raised to thine.

Softly now she sayeth,

“ Krishna, Krishna, come ! ”

Lovingly she prayeth,

“ Fair moon, light him home.”

Yet if Hari helps not,

Moonlight cannot aid ;

Ah ! the woeful Radha !

Ah ! the forest shade !

Ah ! if Hari guide not,

Moonlight is as gloom ;

Ah ! if moonlight help not,

How shall Krishna come ?

Sad for Krishna grieving
 In the darkened grove ;
 Sad for Radha weaving
 Dreams of fruitless love !

*Strike soft strings to this soft measure,
 If thine ear would catch its treasure ;
 Slowly dance to this deep song,
 Let its meaning float along
 With grave paces, since it tells
 Of a love that sweetly dwells
 In a tender distant glory,
 Past all faults of mortal story.*

(*What follows is to the Music DESHÂGA and the Mode*
 EKATÂLÎ.)

Krishna, till thou come unto her, faint she lies with love
 and fear ;
 Even the jewels of her necklet seem a load too great to
 bear.

Krishna, till thou come unto her, all the sandal and the
 flowers
 Vex her with their pure perfection though they grow in
 heavenly bowers.


Krishna, till thou come unto her, fair albeit those bowers
may be,
Passion burns her, and love's fire fevers her for lack of
thee.

Krishna, till thou come unto her, those divine lids, dark
and tender,
Droop like lotus-leaves in rain-storms, dashed and heavy
in their splendor.

Krishna, till thou come unto her, that rose-couch which
she hath spread
Saddens with its empty place, its double pillow for one
head.

Krishna, till thou come unto her, from her palms she will
not lift
The dark face hidden deep within them like the moon in
cloudy rift.

Krishna, till thou come unto her, angel though she be,
thy Love
Sighs and suffers, waits and watches — joyless 'mid those
joys above.



Krishna, till thou come unto her, with the comfort of thy
kiss

Deeper than thy loss, O Krishna ! must be loss of Radha's
bliss.

Krishna, while thou didst forget her — her, thy life, thy
gentle fate —

Wonderful her waiting was, her pity sweet, her patience
great.

Krishna, come ! 'tis grief untold to grieve her — shame to
let her sigh ;

Come, for she is sick with love, and thou her only
remedy.

*So she sang, and Jayadeva
Prays for all, and prays for ever,
That Great Hari may bestow
Utmost bliss of loving so
On us all ; — that one who wore
The herdsman's form, and heretofore,
To save the shepherd's threatened flock,
Up from the earth reared the huge rock —*

*Bestow it with a gracious hand,
Albeit, amid the woodland band,
Clinging close in fond caresses
Krishna gave them ardent kisses,
Taking on his lips divine
Earthly stamp and woodland sign.*

(Here ends that Sarga of the Gita Govinda entitled

SNIGDHAMADHUSUDANO.)

SARGA THE FIFTH.



SAKANDKSHAPUNDARIKAKSHO.

THE LONGINGS OF KRISHNA.

“SAY I am here ! oh, if she pardons me,
Say where I am, and win her softly hither,”
So Krishna to the maid ; and willingly
She came again to Radha, and she sang

(What follows is to the Music DESHIVARÂDÎ and the Mode

RUPAKA.)

Low whispers the wind from Malaya
Overladen with love ;
On the hills all the grass is burned yellow ;
And the trees in the grove

Drop with tendrils that mock by their clinging
The thoughts of the parted ;
And there lies, sore-sighing for thee,
Thy love, altered-hearted.

To him the moon's icy-chill silver
Is a sun at midday ;
The fever he burns with is deeper
Than starlight can stay :
Like one who falls stricken by arrows,
With the color departed
From all but his red wounds, so lies
Thy love, bleeding-hearted.

To the music the banded bees make him
He closeth his ear ;
In the blossoms their small horns are blowing
The honey-song clear ;
But as if every sting to his bosom
Its smart had imparted,
Low lies by the edge of the river,
Thy love, aching-hearted.

By the edge of the river, far wandered
From his once beloved bowers,
And the haunts of his beautiful playmates,
And the beds strewn with flowers ;
Now thy name is his playmate — that only ! —
And the hard rocks upstarted
From the sand make the couch where he lies,
Thy Krishna, sad-hearted.

*Oh may Hari fill each soul,
As these gentle verses roll
Telling of the anguish borne
By kindred ones asunder torn !
Oh may Hari unto each
All the lore of loving teach,
All the pain and all the bliss ;
Jayadeva prayeth this !*

Yea, Lady ! in the self-same spot he waits
Where with thy kiss thou taught'st him utmost love,
And drew him, as none else draws, with thy look ;
And all day long, and all night long, his cry
Is " Radha, Radha," like a spell said o'er ;

And in his heart there lives no wish nor hope
Save only this, to slake his spirit's thirst
For Radha's love on Radha's lips ; and find
Peace in the immortal beauty of thy brow.

(*What follows is to the Music GURJJARÎ and the Mode
EKATÂLÎ.*)

Mistress, sweet and bright and holy !
Meet him in that place ;
Change his cheerless melancholy
Into joy and grace ;
If thou hast forgiven, vex not ;
If thou lovest, go ;
Watching ever by the river,
Krishna listens low :

Listens low, and on his reed there
Softly sounds thy name,
Making even mute things plead there
For his hope : 'tis shame
That, while winds are welcome to him,
If from thee they blow,
Mournful ever by the river
Krishna waits thee so !

When a bird's wing stirs the roses,
When a leaf falls dead,
Twenty times he recomposes
The flower-seat he has spread :
Twenty times, with anxious glances
Seeking thee in vain,
Sighing ever by the river,
Krishna droops again.

Loosen from thy foot the bangle,
Lest its golden bell,
With a tiny, tattling jangle,
Any false tale tell :
If thou fearest that the moonlight
Will thy glad face know,
Draw those dark braids lower, Lady !
But to Krishna go.

Swift and still as lightning's splendor
Let thy beauty come,
Sudden, gracious, dazzling, tender,
To his arms — its home :

Swift as Indra's yellow lightning,
Shining through the night,
Glide to Krishna's lonely bosom,
Take him love and light.

Grant, at last, love's utmost measure,
Giving, give the whole ;
Keep back nothing of the treasure
Of thy priceless soul :
Hold with both hands out unto him
Thy chalice, let him drain
The nectar of its dearest draught,
Till not a wish remain.

Only go — the stars are setting,
And thy Krishna grieves ;
Doubt and anger quite forgetting,
Hasten through the leaves :
Wherefore didst thou lead him heav'nward
But for this thing's sake ?
Comfort him with pity, Radha !
Or his heart must break.

*But while Jayadeva writes
This rare tale of deep delights —
Jayadev, whose heart is given
Unto Hari, Lord in Heaven —
See that ye too, as ye read,
With a glad and humble heed,
Bend your brows before His face,
That ye may have bliss and grace.*

And then the Maid, compassionate, sang on —

Lady, most sweet !
For thy coming feet
He listens in the wood, with love sore-tried ;
Faintly sighing,
Like one a-dying,
He sends his thoughts afoot to meet his bride.

Ah, silent one !
Sunk is the sun,
The darkness falls as deep as Krishna's sorrow ;
The chakor's strain
Is not more vain
Than mine, and soon gray dawn will bring white
morrow.

And thine own bliss
Delays by this ;
The utmost of thy heaven comes only so
When, with hearts beating
And passionate greeting,
Parting is over, and the parted grow

One — one for ever !
And the old endeavor
To be so blended is assuaged at last ;
And the glad tears raining
Have nought remaining
Of doubt or 'plaining ; and the dread has passed

Out of each face,
In the close embrace,
That by-and-by embracing will be over ;
The ache that causes
Those mournful pauses
In bowers of earth between lover and lover :

To be no more felt,
To fade, to melt
In the strong certainty of joys immortal ;

SARGA THE SIXTH.



DHRISHTAVA I KUNTO.

KRISHNA MADE BOLDER.

BUT seeing that, for all her loving will,
The flower-soft feet of Radha had not power
To leave their place and go, she sped again —
That maiden — and to Krishna's eager ears
Told how it fared with his sweet mistress there.

(*What follows is to the Music GONDAKIRI and the Mode*

RUPAKA.)

Krishna ! 'tis thou must come, (she sang)

Ever she waits thee in heavenly bower ;

The lotus seeks not the wandering bee,

The bee must find the flower.

All the wood over her deep eyes roam,
Marvelling sore where tarries the bee,
Who leaves such lips of nectar unsought
As those that blossom for thee.

Her steps would fail if she tried to come,
Would falter and fail, with yearning weak ;
At the first of the road they would falter and pause,
And the way is strange to seek.

Find her where she is sitting, then,
With lotus-blossom on ankle and arm
Wearing thine emblems, and musing of nought
But the meeting to be — glad, warm.

To be — “but wherefore tarrieth he?”
“What can stay or delay him? — go !
See if the soul of Krishna comes,”
Ten times she sayeth to me so ;

Ten times lost in a languorous swoon,
“Now he cometh — he cometh,” she cries ;
And a love-look lights her eyes in the gloom,
And the darkness is sweet with her sighs.

Till, watching in vain, she sinks again
Under the shade of the whispering leaves,
With a heart too full of its love at last
To heed how her bosom heaves.

*Shall not these fair verses swell
The number of the wise who dwell
In the realm of Kama's bliss ?
Fayadeva prayeth this,
Fayadev, the bard of Love,
Servant of the Gods above.*

For all so strong in Heaven itself
Is Love, that Radha sits drooping there,
Her beautiful bosoms panting with thought,
And the braids drawn back from her ear.

And — angel albeit — her rich lips breathe
Sighs, if sighs were ever so sweet ;
And — if spirits can tremble — she trembles now
From forehead to jewelled feet.

And her voice of music sinks to a sob,
And her eyes, like eyes of a mated roe,

Are tender with looks of yielded love,
With dreams dreamed long ago ;

Long — long ago, but soon to grow truth,
To end, and be waking and certain and true ;
Of which dear surety murmur her lips,
As the lips of sleepers do :

And, dreaming, she loosens her girdle-pearls,
And opens her arms to the empty air,
Then starts, if a leaf of the champâk falls,
Sighing, “ O leaf ! is he there ? ”

Why dost thou linger in this dull spot,
Haunted by serpents and evil for thee ?
Why not hasten to Nanda's House ?
It is plain, if thine eyes could see.

*May these words of high endeavor —
Full of grace and gentle favor —
Find out those whose hearts can feel
What the message did reveal,*

*Words that Radha's messenger
Unto Krishna took from her,
Slowly guiding him to come
Through the forest to his home,
Guiding him to find the road
Which led — though long — to Love's abode.*

(Here ends that Sarga of the Gita Govinda entitled

DHRISHTAVAIKUNTO.)

SARGA THE SEVENTH.



VIPRALABDHAVARNANE
NAGARANARAYANO.

KRISHNA SUPPOSED FALSE.

MEANTIME the moon, the rolling moon, clomb high,
And over all Vrindāvana it shone ;
The moon which on the front of gentle night
Gleams like the chundun-mark on beauty's brow ;
The conscious moon which hath its silver face
Marred with the shame of lighting earthly loves :

And while the round white lamp of earth rose higher,
And still he tarried, Radha, petulant,
Sang soft impatience and half-earnest fears.

(*What follows is to the Music MÂLAVA and the Mode*

YATI.)

'Tis time ! — he comes not ! — will he come ?

Can he leave me thus to pine ?

Yami hê kam sharanam !

Ah ! what refuge then is mine ?

For his sake I sought the wood,

Threaded dark and devious ways ;

Yami hê kam sharanam !

Can it be Krishna betrays ?

Let me die then, and forget

Anguish, patience, hope, and fear ;

Yami hê kam sharanam !

Ah, why have I held him dear ?

Ah, this soft night torments me,

Thinking that his faithless arms —

Yami hê kam sharanam ! —

Clasp some shadow of my charms.

Fatal shadow — foolish mock !

When the great love shone confessed ; —

Yami hê kam sharanam !

Krishna's lotus loads my breast ;

'Tis too heavy, lacking him ;

Like a broken flower I am —

Necklets, jewels, what are ye ?

Yami hê kam sharanam !

Yami hê kam sharanam !

The sky is still, the forest sleeps ;

Krishna forgets — he loves no more ;

He fails in faith, and Radha weeps.

But the poet Jayadev —

He who is great Hari's slave,

He who finds asylum sweet

Only at great Hari's feet ;

He who for your comfort sings

All this to the Vina's strings —

Prays that Radha's tender moan

In your hearts be thought upon,

And that all her holy grace

Live there like the loved one's face.

Yet, if I wrong him (sang she) — can he fail?

Could any in the wood win back his kisses?

Could any softest lips of earth prevail

To hold him from my arms? any love-blisses

Blind him once more to mine? O Soul, my prize!

Art thou not merely hindered at this hour?

Sore-wearied, wandering, lost? how otherwise

Shouldst thou not hasten to the bridal-bower?

But seeing far away that Maiden come

Alone, with eyes cast down and lingering steps,

Again a little while she feared to hear

Of Krishna false; and her quick thoughts took shape

In a fine jealousy, with words like these —

Something then of earth has held him

From his home above,

Some one of those slight deceivers —

Ah, my foolish love!

Some new face, some winsome playmate,
With her hair untied,
And the blossoms tangled in it,
Woos him to her side.

On the dark orbs of her bosom —
Passionately heaved —
Sink and rise the warm, white pearl-strings,
Oh, my love deceived !

Fair? yes, yes ! the rippled shadow
Of that midnight hair
Shows above her brow — as clouds do
O'er the moon — most fair :

And she knows, with wilful paces,
How to make her zone
Gleam and please him ; and her ear-rings
Tinkle love ; and grown

Coy as he grows fond, she meets him
With a modest show ;
Shaming truth with truthful seeming,
While her laugh — light, low —

And her subtle mouth that murmurs,
And her silken cheek,
And her eyes, say she dissembles
Plain as speech could speak.

Till at length, a fatal victress,
Of her triumph vain,
On his neck she lies and smiles there : —
Ah, my Joy ! — my Pain !

*But may Radha's fond annoy,
And may Krishna's dawning joy,
Warm and waken love more fit —
Jayadeva prayeth it —
And the griefs and sins assuage
Of this blind and evil age.*

O Moon ! (she sang) that art so pure and pale,
Is Krishna wan like thee with lonely waiting?
O lamp of love ! art thou the lover's friend,
And wilt not bring him, my long pain abating?
O fruitless moon ! thou dost increase my pain ;
O faithless Krishna ! I have striven in vain.

And then, lost in her fancies sad, she moaned —

(*What follows is to the Music GURJJARĪ and the Mode
EKATĀLĪ.*)

In vain, in vain !

Earth will of earth ! I mourn more than I blame ;

If he had known, he would not sit and paint

The tilka on her smooth black brow, nor claim

Quick kisses from her yielded lips — false, faint —

False, fragrant, fatal ! Krishna's quest is o'er

By Jumna's shore !

.

Vain — it was vain !

The temptress was too near, the heav'n too far ;

I can but weep because he sits and ties

Garlands of fire-flowers for her loosened hair,

And in its silken shadow veils his eyes

And buries his fond face. Yet I forgave

By Jumna's wave !

Vainly ! all vain !

Make then the most of that whereto thou'rt given,

Feign her thy Paradise — thy Love of loves ;

Say that her eyes are stars, her face the heaven,
Her bosoms the two worlds, with sandal-groves
Faint-scented, and the kiss-marks — ah, thy dream
By Jumna's stream !

It shall be vain !
And vain to string the emeralds on her arm
And hang the milky pearls upon her neck,
Saying they are not jewels, but a swarm
Of crowded, glossy bees, come there to suck
The rosebuds of her breast, the sweetest flowers
Of Jumna's bowers.

That shall be vain !
Nor wilt thou so believe thine own blind wooing,
Nor slake thy heart's thirst even with the cup
Which at the last she brims for thee, undoing
Her girdle of carved gold, and yielding up,
Love's uttermost : brief the poor gain and pride
By Jumna's tide

Because still vain
Is love that feeds on shadow ; vain, as thou dost,
To look so deep into the phantom eyes

For that which lives not there ; and vain, as thou must,
To marvel why the painted pleasure flies,
When the fair, false wings seemed folded for ever
By Jumna's river.

And vain ! yes, vain !
For me too is it, having so much striven,
To see this fine snare take thee, and thy soul
Which should have climbed to mine, and shared my
heaven,
Spent on a lower loveliness, whose whole
Passion of love were but a parody
Of that kept here for thee.

Ahaha ! vain !
For on some isle of Jumna's silver stream
He gives all that they ask to those dull eyes,
While mine which are his angel's, mine which gleam
With light that might have led him to the skies —
That almost led him — are eclipsed with tears
Wailing my fruitless prayers.

But thou, good Friend,
Hang not thy head for shame, nor come so slowly,
As one whose message is too hard to tell ;

If thou must say Krishna is forfeit wholly —
 Wholly forsworn and lost — let the grief dwell
 Where the sin doth, — except in this sad heart,
 Which cannot shun its part.

*O great Hari ! purge from wrong
 The soul of him who writes this song ;
 Purge the souls of those that read
 From every fault of thought and deed ;
 With thy blessed light assuage
 The darkness of this evil age !
 Jayadev the bard of love,
 Servant of the Gods above,
 Prays it for himself and you —
 Gentle hearts who listen ! — too.*

Then in this other strain she wailed his loss —

(What follows is to the Music DESHAVARÂDÎ and the Mode

RUPAKA.)

She, not Radha, wins the crown
 Whose false lips were dearest ;

What was distant gain to him
When sweet loss stood nearest ?
Love her, therefore, lulled to loss
On her fatal bosom ;
Love her with such love as she
Can give back in the blossom.

Love her, O thou rash lost soul !
With thy thousand graces ;
Coin rare thoughts into fair words
For her face of faces ;
Praise it, fling away for it
Life's purpose in a sigh,
All for those lips like flower-leaves,
And lotus-dark deep eye.

Nay, and thou shalt be happy too
Till the fond dream is over ;
And she shall taste delight to hear
The wooing of her lover ;
The breeze that brings the sandal up
From distant green Malay,
Shall seem all fragrance in the night,
All coolness in the day.

The crescent moon shall seem to swim
Only that she may see
The glad eyes of my Krishna gleam,
And her soft glances he :
It shall be as a silver lamp
Set in the sky to show
The rose-leaf palms that cling and clasp,
And the breast that beats below.

The thought of parting shall not lie
Cold on their throbbing lives,
The dread of ending shall not chill
The glow beginning gives ;
She in her beauty dark shall look —
As long as clouds can be —
As gracious as the rain-time cloud
Kissing the shining sea.

And he, amid his playmates old,
At least a little while,
Shall not breathe forth again the sigh
That spoils the song and smile ;

Shall be left wholly to his choice,
Free for his pleasant sin,
With the golden-girdled damsels
Of the bowers I found him in.

For me, his Angel, only
The sorrow and the smart,
The pale grief sitting on the brow
The dead hope in the heart ;
For me the loss of losing,
For me the ache and dearth ;
My king crowned with the wood-flowers !
My fairest upon earth !

*Hari, Lord and King of love !
From thy throne of light above
Stoop to help us, deign to take
Our spirits to thee for the sake
Of this song, which speaks the fears
Of all who weep with Radha's tears.*

But love is strong to pardon, slow to part,
And still the Lady, in her fancies, sang —

Wind of the Indian stream !

A little — oh ! a little — breathe once more
The fragrance like his mouth's ! blow from thy shore
A last word as he fades into a dream ;

Bodiless Lord of love !

Show him once more to me a minute's space,
My Krishna, with the love-look in his face,
And then I come to my own place above ;

I will depart and give

All back to Fate and her : I will submit
To thy stern will, and bow myself to it,
Enduring still, though desolate, to live :

If it indeed be life,

Even so resigning, to sit patience-mad,
To feel the zephyrs burn, the sunlight sad,
The peace of holy heaven, a restless strife.

Haho ! what words are these ?

How can I live and lose him ? how not go
Whither love draws me for a soul loved so ?
How yet endure such sorrow ? — or how cease ?

Wind of the Indian wave !

If that thou canst, blow poison here, not nard ;
God of the five shafts ! shoot thy sharpest hard,
And kill me, Radha, — Radha who forgave !

Or, bitter River,
Yamûn ! be Yama's sister ! be Death's kin !
Swell thy wave up to me and gulf me in,
Cooling this cruel, burning pain for ever.

*Ah ! if only visions stir
Grief so passionate in her,
What divine grief will not take,
Spirits in heaven for the sake
Of those who miss love ? Oh, be wise !
Mark this story of the skies ;
Meditate Govinda ever,
Sitting by the sacred river,
The mystic stream, which o'er his feet
Glides slow, with murmurs low and sweet,
Till none can tell whether those be
Blue lotus-blooms, seen veiledly
Under the wave, or mirrored gems
Reflected from the diadems*

•

*Bound on the brows of mighty Gods,
Who lean from out their pure abodes,
And leave their bright felicities
To guide great Krishna to his skies.*

*(Here ends that Sarga of the Gita Govinda entitled
VIPRALABDHAVARNANE NAGARANARAYANO.)*

SARGA THE EIGHTH.



KHANDITAVARNANE
VILAKSHALAKSHMIPATI.

THE REBUKING OF KRISHNA.

FOR when the weary night had worn away
In these vain fears, and the clear morning broke,
Lo, Krishna ! lo, the longed-for of her soul
Came too ! — in the glad light he came, and bent
His knees, and clasped his hands ; on his dumb lips
Fear, wonder, joy, passion, and reverence
Strove for the trembling words, and Radha knew
Joy won for him and her ; yet none the less
A little time she chided him, and sang,

(*What follows is to the Music BHAIRAVĪ and the Mode*
YATĪ.)

Krishna ! — then thou hast found me ! — and thine eyes
Heavy and sad and stained, as if with weeping !
Ah ! is it not that those which were thy prize
So radiant seemed that all night thou wert keeping
Vigils of tender wooing ? — have thy Love !
Here is no place for vows broken in making ;
Thou Lotus-eyed ! thou soul for whom I strove !
Go ! ere I listen, my just mind forsaking.

Krishna ! my Krishna with the woodland-wreath !
Return, or I shall soften as I blame ;
The while thy very lips are dark to the teeth
With dye that from her lids and lashes came,
Left on the mouth I touched. Fair traitor ! go !
Say not they darkened, lacking food and sleep
Long waiting for my face ; I turn it — so —
Go ! ere I half believe thee, pleading deep ;

But wilt thou plead, when, like a love-verse printed
On the smooth polish of an emerald,

I see the marks she stamped, the kisses dinted
Large-lettered, by her lips? thy speech withheld
Speaks all too plainly ; go, — abide thy choice !
If thou dost stay, I shall more greatly grieve thee ;
Not records of her victory? — peace, dear voice !
Hence with that godlike brow, lest I believe thee.

For dar'st thou feign the saffron on thy bosom
Was not implanted in disloyal embrace?
Or that this many-colored love-tree blossom
Shone not, but yesternight, above her face?
Comest thou here, so late, to be forgiven,
O thou, in whose eyes Truth was made to live?
O thou, so worthy else of grace and heaven?
O thou, so nearly won? Ere I forgive,

Go, Krishna ! go ! — lest I should think, unwise,
Thy heart not false, as thy long lingering seems,
Lest, seeing myself so imaged in thine eyes,
I shame the name of Pity — turn to dreams
The sacred sound of vows ; make Virtue grudge
Her praise to Mercy, calling thy sin slight ;

Go therefore, dear offender ! go ! thy Judge
 Had best not see thee to give sentence right.*

*But may he grant us peace at last and bliss
 Who heard,— and smiled to hear,—delays like this,
 Delays that dallied with a dream come true,
 Fond wilful angers ; for the maid laughed too
 To see, as Radha ended, her hand take
 His dark robe for her veil, and Krishna make
 The word she spoke for parting kindest sign
 He should not go, but stay. O grace divine,
 Be ours too ! Jayadev, the Poet of love,
 Prays it from Hari, lordliest above.*

*(Here ends that Sarga of the Gita Govinda entitled
 KHANDITAVARNANE VILAKSHALAKSHMIPATI.)*

* The text here is not closely followed.

SARGA THE NINTH.

KALAHANTARITAVARNANE
MUGDHAMUKUNDO.

THE END OF KRISHNA'S TRIAL.

YET not quite did the doubts of Radha die,
Nor her sweet brows unbend ; but she, the Maid —
Knowing her heart so tender, her soft arms
Aching to take him in, her rich mouth sad
For the comfort of his kiss, and these fears false —
Spake yet a little in fair words like these,

(*What follows is to the Music GURJJARĪ and the Mode
YATI.*)

The lesson that thy faithful love has taught him
He has heard ;
The wind of spring, obeying thee, hath brought him
At thy word ;

How knowest thou? Ah, listen, dearest Lady,

He is there ;

Mâ kooroo mânini mânamayè,

Thou must hear !

*O rare voice, which is a spell
Unto all on earth who dwell !
O rich voice of rapturous love,
Making melody above !
Krishna's, Hari's — one in two,
Sound these mortal verses through !
Sound like that soft flute which made
Such a magic in the shade —
Calling deer-eyed maidens nigh,
Waking wish and stirring sigh,
Thrilling blood and melting breasts,
Whispering love's divine unrests,
Winning blessings to descend,
Bringing earthly ills to end ;—
Be thou heard in this song now
Thou, the great Enchantment, thou !*

(*Here ends that Sarga of the Gita Govinda entitled
KALAHANTARITAVARNANE MUGDHAMUKUNDO.*)

SARGA THE TENTH.



MANINIVARNANE
CHATURACHATURBHUJO.

KRISHNA IN PARADISE.

BUT she, abasing still her glorious eyes,
And still not yielding all her face to him,
Relented, till with softer upturned look
She smiled, while the Maid pleaded ; so thereat
Came Krishna nearer, and his eager lips
Mixed sighs with words in this fond song he sang,

(*What follows is to the Music DESHĪYAVARĀDĪ and the
Mode ASHTATĀLĪ.*)

O angel of my hope ! O my heart's home !
My fear is lost in love, my love in fear ;

This bids me trust my burning wish, and come,
That checks me with its memories, drawing near :
Lift up thy look, and let the thing it saith
End fear with grace, or darken love to death.

Or only speak once more, for though thou slay me,
Thy heavenly mouth must move, and I shall hear
Dulcet delights of perfect music sway me
Again — again that voice so blest and dear ;
Sweet Judge ! the prisoner prayeth for his doom
That he may hear his fate divinely come.

Speak once more ! then thou canst not choose but show
Thy mouth's unparalleled and honeyed wonder
Where, like pearls hid in red-lipped shells, the row
Of pearly teeth thy rose-red lips lie under ;
Ah me ! I am that bird that woos the moon,
And pipes — poor fool ! to make it glitter soon.

Yet hear me on — because I cannot stay
The passion of my soul, because my gladness
Will pour forth from my heart, — since that far day
When through the mist of all my sin and sadness

Thou didst vouchsafe — Surpassing One ! — to break,
All else I slighted for thy noblest sake.

Thou, thou hast been my blood, my breath, my being ;
The pearl to plunge for in the sea of life ;
The sight to strain for, past the bounds of seeing ;
The victory to win through longest strife ;
My Queen ! my crownèd Mistress ! my spherèd bride !
Take this for truth, that what I say beside

Of bold love — grown full-orbed at sight of thee —
May be forgiven with a quick remission ;
For, thou divine fulfilment of all hope !
Thou all-undreamed completion of the vision !
I gaze upon thy beauty, and my fear
Passes as clouds do, when the moon shines clear.

So if thou'rt angry still, this shall avail,
Look straight at me, and let thy bright glance wound
me ;
Fetter me ! gyve me ! lock me in the gaol
Of thy delicious arms ; make fast around me
The silk-soft manacles of wrists and hands,
Then kill me ! I shall never break those bands.

The starlight jewels flashing on thy breast
Have not my right to hear thy beating heart ;
The happy jasmine-buds that clasp thy waist
Are soft usurpers of my place and part ;
If that fair girdle only there must shine,
Give me the girdle's life — the girdle mine !

Thy brow like smooth Bandhûka-leaves ; thy cheek
Which the dark-tinted Madhuk's velvet shows ;
Thy long-lashed Lotus eyes, lustrous and meek ;
Thy nose a Tila-bud ; thy teeth like rows
Of Kunda-petals ! he who pierceth hearts
Points with thy lovelinesses all five darts.

But Radiant, Perfect, Sweet, Supreme, forgive !
My heart is wise — my tongue is foolish still :
I know where I am come — I know I live —
I know that thou art Radha — that this will
Last and be heaven : that I have leave to rise
Up from thy feet, and look into thine eyes !

And, nearer coming, I ask for grace
Now that the blest eyes turn to mine ;

Faithful I stand in this sacred place
 Since first I saw them shine :
 Dearest glory that stills my voice,
 Beauty unseen, unknown, unthought !
 Splendor of love, in whose sweet light
 Darkness is past and nought ;
 Ah, beyond words that sound on earth,
 Golden bloom of the garden of heaven !
 Radha, enchantress ! Radha, the queen !
 Be this trespass forgiven —
 In that I dare, with courage too much
 And a heart afraid, — so bold it is grown —
 To hold thy hand with a bridegroom's touch,
 And take thee for mine, mine own.*

*So they met and so they ended
 Pain and parting, being blended
 Life with life — made one for ever
 In high love ; and Jayadeva
 Hasteneth on to close the story
 Of their bridal grace and glory.*

(Here ends that Sarga of the Gita Govinda entitled
 MANINIVARNANE CHATURACHATURBHUJO.)

* Much here also is necessarily paraphrased.

SARGA THE ELEVENTH.



RADHIKAMILANE
SANANDADAMODARO.

THE UNION OF RADHA AND KRISHNA.

THUS followed soft and lasting peace, and griefs
Died while she listened to his tender tongue,
Her eyes of antelope alight with love ;
And while he led the way to the bride-bower
The maidens of her train adorned her fair
With golden marriage-cloths, and sang this song,

(*What follows is to the Music VASANTA and the Mode*
YATI.)

Follow, happy Radha ! follow, —
In the quiet falling twilight —

The steps of him who followed thee
So steadfastly and far ;
Let us bring thee where the Banjulas
Have spread a roof of crimson,
Lit up by many a marriage-lamp
Of planet, sun, and star :
For the hours of doubt are over,
And thy glad and faithful lover
Hath found the road by tears and prayers
To thy divinest side ;
And thou wilt not now deny him
One delight of all thy beauty,
But yield up open-hearted
His pearl, his prize, his bride.

Oh, follow ! while we fill the air
With songs and softest music ;
Lauding thy wedded loveliness,
Dear Mistress past compare !
For there is not any splendor
Of Apsarasas immortal —
No glory of their beauty rich —
But Radha has a share ;

Oh, follow ! while we sing the song
That fills the worlds with longing,
The music of the Lord of love
Who melts all hearts with bliss ;
For now is born the gladness
That springs from mortal sadness,
And all soft thoughts and things and hopes
Were presages of this.

Then, follow, happiest Lady !
Follow him thou lovest wholly ;
The hour is come to follow now
The soul thy spells have led ;
His are thy breasts like jasper-cups,
And his thine eyes like planets ;
Thy fragrant hair, thy stately neck,
Thy queenly sumptuous head ;
Thy soft small feet, thy perfect lips,
Thy teeth like jasmine petals,
Thy gleaming rounded shoulders,
And long caressing arms,
Being thine to give, are his ; and his
The twin strings of thy girdle,

And his'the priceless treasure
Of thine utter-sweetest charms.

So follow ! while the flowers break forth
In white and amber clusters,
At the breath of thy pure presence,
And the radiance on thy brow ;
Oh, follow where the Asokas wave
Their sprays of gold and purple,
As if to beckon thee the way
That Krishna passed but now ;
He is gone a little forward !
Though thy steps are faint for pleasure,
Let him hear the tattling ripple
Of the bangles round thy feet ;
Moving slowly o'er the blossoms
On the path which he has shown thee,
That when he turns to listen
It may make his fond heart beat.

And loose thy jewelled girdle
A little, that its rubies
May tinkle softest music too,
And whisper thou art near ;

Though now, if in the forest
 Thou should'st bend one blade of Kusha
 With silken touch of passing foot,
 His heart would know and hear ;
 Would hear the wood-buds saying,
 " It is Radha's foot that passes ;"
 Would hear the wind sigh love-sick,
 " It is Radha's fragrance, this ;"
 Would hear thine own heart beating
 Within thy panting bosom,
 And know thee coming, coming,
 His — ever, — ever — his !

" *Mine !*" — hark ! we are near enough for hearing —
" Soon she will come — she will smile — she will say
Honey-sweet words of heavenly endearing ;
O soul ! listen ; my Bride is on her way !"

Hear'st him not, my Radha ?
 Lo, night bendeth o'er thee —
 Darker than dark Tamâla-leaves —
 To list thy marriage-song ;
 Dark as the touchstone that tries gold,
 And see now — on before thee —

Those lines of tender light that creep
The clouded sky along :
O night ! that trieth gold of love,
This love is proven perfect !
O lines that streak the touchstone sky,
Flash forth true shining gold !
O rose-leaf feet, go boldly !
O night ! — that lovest lovers —
Thy softest robe of silence
About these bridals fold !

See'st thou not, my Radha?
Lo, the night, thy bridesmaid,
Comes ! — her eyes thick-painted
With soorma of the gloom —
The night that binds the planet-worlds
For jewels on her forehead,
And for emblem and for garland
Loves the blue-black lotus-bloom ;
The night that scents her breath so sweet
With cool and musky odors,
That joys to spread her veil of shade
Over the limbs of love ;

And when, with loving weary,
 Yet dreaming love, they slumber,
 Sets the far stars for silver lamps
 To light them from above.

So came she where he stood, awaiting her
 At the bower's entry, like a god to see,
 With marriage-gladness and the grace of heaven.
 The great pearl set upon his glorious head
 Shone like a moon among the leaves, and shone
 Like stars the gems that kept her gold gown close :
 But still a little while she paused — abashed
 At her delight, of her deep joy afraid —
 And they that tended her sang once more this,

(*What follows is to the Music VARÂDI and the Mode*
 RUPAKA.)

Enter, thrice-happy ! enter, thrice-desired !
 And let the gates of Hari shut thee in
 With the soul destined to thee from of old.

Tremble not ! lay thy lovely shame aside ;
 Lay it aside with thine unfastened zone,
 And love him with the love that knows not fear ;

Because it fears not change ; enter thou in,
Flower of all sweet and stainless womanhood !
For ever to grow bright, for ever new ;

Enter beneath the flowers, O flower-fair !
Beneath these tendrils, Loveliest ! that entwine
And clasp, and wreath and cling, with kissing stems ;

Enter, with tender-blowing airs of heaven
Soft as love's breath and gentle as the tones
Of lover's whispers, when the lips come close :

Enter the house of Love, O loveliest !
Enter the marriage-bower, most beautiful !
And take and give the joy that Hari grants.

Thy heart has entered, let thy feet go too !
Lo, Krishna ! lo, the one that thirsts for thee !
Give him the drink of amrit from thy lips.

Then she, no more delaying, entered straight ;
Her step a little faltered, but her face
Shone with unutterable quick love ; and — while

The music of her bangles passed the porch —
 Shame, which had lingered in her downcast eyes,
 Departed shamed* . . . and like the mighty deep,
 Which sees the moon and rises, all his life
 Uprose to drink her beams.

*(Here ends that Sarga of the Gita Govinda entitled
 RADHIKAMILANE SANANDADAMODARO.)*

Hari keep you ! He whose might,
 On the King of Serpents seated,
 Flashes forth in dazzling light
 From the Great Snake's gems repeated :
 Hari keep you ! He whose graces,
 Manifold in majesty, —
 Multiplied in heavenly places —
 Multiply on earth — to see

* This complete anticipation (*salajjā lajjāpi*) of the line —

“ Upon whose brow shame is ashamed to sit ”

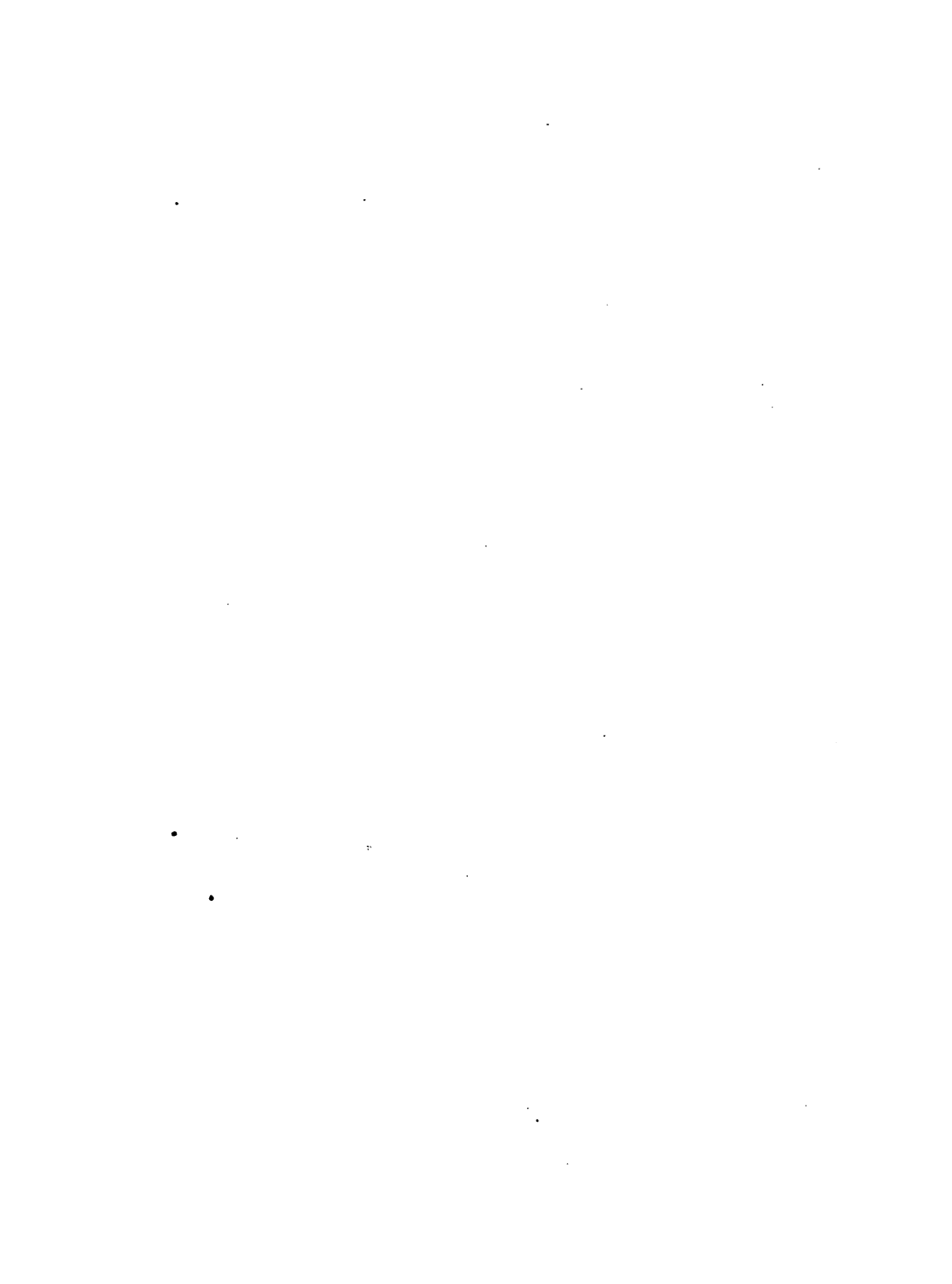
— occurs at the close of the Sarga, part of which is here perforce omitted, along with the whole of the last one.

Better with a hundred eyes
Her bright charms who by him lies.

*What skill may be in singing,
What worship sound in song,
What lore be taught in loving,
What right divined from wrong :
Such things hath Jayadeva —
In this his Hymn of Love,
Which lauds Govinda ever, —
Displayed ; may all approve !*

THE END OF THE INDIAN SONG OF SONGS.

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.



THE RAJPOOT WIFE.

SING something, Jymul Rao ! for the goats are gathered
now,

And no more water is to bring ;
The village-gates are set, and the night is gray as yet,
God hath given wondrous fancies to thee : — sing !

Then Jymul's supple fingers, with a touch that doubts and
lingers,

Sets athrill the saddest wire of all the six ;
And the girls sit in a tangle, and hush the tinkling bangle ;
While the boys pile the flame with store of sticks.

And vain of village praise, but full of ancient days,

He begins with a smile and with a sigh —

“ Who knows the babul-tree by the bend of the Ravee ? ”

Quoth Gunesh, “ I ! ” and twenty voices, “ I ! ”

L OF C.

“Well — listen ! there below, in the shade of bloom and
bough,

Is a musjid of carved and colored stone ;
And Abdool Shureef Khan — I spit, to name that man ! —
Lieth there, underneath, all alone.

“ He was Sultān Mahmood’s vassal, and wore an Amir’s
tassel

In his green hadj-turban, at Nungul.
Yet the head which went so proud, it is not in his shroud ;
There are bones in that grave, — but not a skull !

“ And, deep drove in his breast, there moulders with the
rest

A dagger, brighter once than Chundra’s ray ;
A Rajpoot lohar whet it, and a Rajpoot woman set it
Past the power of any hand to tear away.

“ ’Twas the Ranee Neila true, the wife of Soorj Dehu,
Lord of the Rajpoots of Nourpoo ;
You shall hear the mournful story, with its sorrow and its
glory,

And cursèd Shureef Khan, — the soor ! ”

All in the wide Five-Waters was none like Soorj Dehu,
To foeman who so dreadful, to friend what heart so true ?

Like Indus, through the mountains came down the Mus-
lim ranks,
And town-walls fell before them as flooded river-banks ;

But Soorj Dehu the Rajpoot owned neither town nor
wall ;
His house the camp, his roof-tree the sky that covers all ;

His seat of state the saddle ; his robe a shirt of mail ;
His court a thousand Rajpoots close at his stallion's tail

Not less was Soorj a Rajah because no crown he wore
Save the grim helm of iron with sword-marks dinted
o'er ;

Because he grasped no sceptre save the sharp tulwar,
made
Of steel that fell from heaven, — for 'twas Indra forged
that blade !

And many a starless midnight the shout of "Soorj Dehu"
Broke up with spear and matchlock the Muslim's "Illahu."

And many a day of battle upon the Muslim proud
Fell Soorj, as Indra's lightning falls from the silent cloud.

Nor ever shot nor arrow, nor spear nor slinger's stone,
Could pierce the mail that Neila the Ranee buckled on :

But traitor's subtle tongue-thrust through fence of steel
can break ;
And Soorj was taken sleeping, whom none had ta'en
awake.

Then at the noon, in durbar, swore fiercely Shureef Khan
That Soorj should die in torment, or live a Mussulman.

But Soorj laughed lightly at him, and answered, "Work
your will !
The last breath of my body shall curse your Prophet still."

With words of insult shameful, and deeds of cruel kind,
They vexed that Rajpoot's body, but never moved his
mind.

And one is come who sayeth, "Ho ! Rajpoots ! Soorj is
bound ;
Your lord is caged and baited by Shureef Khan, the
hound.

"The Khan hath caught and chained him, like a beast, in
iron cage,
And all the camp of Islam spends on him spite and
rage ;

"All day the coward Muslims spend on him rage and
spite ;
If ye have thought to help him, 'twere good ye go to-
night."

Up sprang a hundred horsemen, flashed in each hand a
sword ;
In each heart burned the gladness of dying for their
lord ;

Up rose each Rajpoot rider, and buckled on with speed
The bridle-chain and breast-cord, and the saddle of his
steed.

But unto none sad Neila gave word to mount and ride ;
Only she called the brothers of Soorj unto her side,

And said, "Take order straightway to seek this camp
with me ;

If love and craft can conquer, a thousand is as three.

"If love be weak to save him, Soorj dies — and ye
return,

For where a Rajpoot dieth, the Rajpoot widows burn."

Thereat the Ranee Neila unbraided from her hair
The pearls as great as Kashmir grapes Soorj gave his
wife to wear,

And all across her bosoms — like lotus-buds to see —
She wrapped the tinselled sari of a dancing Kunchenee ;

And fastened on her ankles the hundred silver bells,
To whose light laugh of music the Nautch-girl darts and
dwells.

And all in dress a Nautch-girl, but all in heart a queen,
She set her foot to stirrup with a sad and settled mien.

Only one thing she carried no Kunchenee should bear,
The knife between her bosoms ; — ho, Shureef ! have a
care !

Thereat, with running ditty of mingled pride and pity,
Jymul Rao makes the six wires sigh ;
And the girls with tearful eyes note the music's fall and
rise,
And the boys let the fire fade and die.

All day lay Soorj the Rajpoot in Shureef's iron cage,
All day the coward Muslims spent on him spite and rage.

With bitter cruel torments, and deeds of shameful kind,
They racked and broke his body, but could not shake his
mind.

And only at the Azan, when all their worst was vain,
They left him, like dogs slinking from a lion in his pain.

No meat nor drink they gave him through all that burn-
ing day,
And done to death, but scornful, at twilight-time he lay.

So when the gem of Shiva uprose, the shining moon,
Soorj spake unto his spirit, "The end is coming soon.

"I would the end might hasten, could Neila only know—
What is that Nautch-girl singing with voice so known and
low?

"Singing beneath the cage-bars the song of love and fear
My Neila sang at parting!—what doth that Nautch-girl
here?

"Whence comes she by the music of Neila's tender
strain,
She, in that shameless tinsel?—O, Nautch-girl, sing
again!"

"Ah, Soorj!"—so followed answer—"here thine own
Neila stands,
Faithful in life and death alike,—look up, and take my
hands:

"Speak low, lest the guard hear us;—to-night, if thou
must die,
Shureef shall have no triumph, but bear thee company."

So sang she like the Koil that dies beside its mate ;
With eye as black and fearless, and love as hot and great.

Then the Chief laid his pale lips upon the little palm,
And sank down with a smile of love, his face all glad and
calm ;

And through the cage-bars Neila felt the brave heart stop
fast,
“ O Soorj ! ” — she cried — “ I follow ! have patience to
the last.”

She turned and went. “ Who passes ? ” challenged the
Mussulman ;
“ A Nautch-girl, I.” — “ What seek’st thou ? ” — “ The
presence of the Khan ;

“ Ask if the high chief-captain be pleased to hear me
sing ; ”
And Shureef, full of feasting, the Kunchenee bade bring.

Then all before the Muslims, aflame with lawless wine,
Entered the Ranee Neila, in grace and face divine ;

And all before the Muslims, wagging their goatish chins,
The Rajpoot Princess set her to the "bee-dance" that
begins,

*"If my love loved me, he should be a bee,
I the yellow champak, love the honey of me."*

All the wreathèd movements danced she of that dance ;
Not a step she slighted, not a wanton glance ;

In her unveiled bosom chased th' intruding bee,
To her waist — and lower — she ! a Rajpoot, she !

Sang the melting music, swayed the languorous limb :
Shureef's drunken heart beat — Shureef's eyes waxed dim.

From his finger Shureef loosed an Ormuz pearl —
"By the Prophet," quoth he, "'tis a winsome girl !

"Take this ring ; and 'prithee, come and have thy pay,
I would hear at leisure more of such a lay."

Glared his eyes on her eyes, passing o'er the plain,
Glared at the tent-purdah — never glared again !

Never opened after unto gaze or glance,
Eyes that saw a Rajpoot dance a shameful dance ;

For the kiss she gave him was his first and last —
Kiss of dagger, driven to his heart, and past.

At her feet he wallowed, choked with wicked blood ;
In his breast the katar quivered where it stood.

At the hilt his fingers vainly — wildly — try,
Then they stiffen feeble ; — die ! thou slayer, die !

From his jewelled scabbard drew she Shureef's sword,
Cut atwain the neck-bone of the Muslim lord.

Underneath the starlight, sooth, a sight of dread !
Like the Goddess Kali, comes she with the head,

Comes to where her brothers guard their murdered chief ;
All the camp is silent, but the night is brief.

At his feet she flings it, flings her burden vile ;
“ Soorj ! I keep my promise ! Brothers, build the pile ! ”

They have built it, set it, all as Rajpoots do,
From the cage of iron taken Soorj Dehu ;

In the lap of Neila, seated on the pile,
Laid his head — she radiant, like a queen the while.

Then the lamp is lighted, and the ghee is poured —
“ Soorj, we burn together : O my love, my lord ! ”

In the flame and crackle dies her tender tongue,
Dies the Ranee, truest, all true wives among.

At the morn a clamor runs from tent to tent,
Like the wild geese cackling when the night is spent.

“ Shureef Khan lies headless ! gone is Soorj Dehu !
And the wandering Nautch-girl, who has seen her, who ? ”

This but know the sentries, at the “ breath of dawn ”
Forth there fared two horsemen, by the first was borne

The urn of clay, the vessel that Rajpoots use to bring
The ashes of dead kinsmen to Gungas' holy spring.

KING SALADIN.



LONG years ago — so tells Boccaccio
In such Italian gentleness of speech
As finds no echo in this northern air
To counterpart its music — long ago,
When Saladin was Soldan of the East,
The kings let cry a general crusade ;
And to the trysting-plains of Lombardy
The idle lances of the North and West
Rode all that spring, as all the spring runs down
Into a lake, from all its hanging hills,
The clash and glitter of a hundred streams.

Whereof the rumor reached to Saladin,
And that swart king — as royal in his heart
As any crownèd champion of the Cross —
That he might fully, of his knowledge, learn
The purpose of the lords of Christendom,

And when their war and what their armament,
Took thought to cross the seas to Lombardy.
Wherefore, with wise and trustful Amirs twain,
All habited in garbs that merchants use,
With trader's band and gipsire on the breast
That best loved mail and dagger, Saladin
Set forth upon his journey perilous.

 In that day, lordly land was Lombardy !
A sea of country-plenty, islanded
With cities rich ; nor richer one than thee,
Marble Milano ! from whose gate at dawn —
With ear that little recked the matin-bell,
But a keen eye to measure wall and foss —
The Soldan rode ; and all day long he rode
For Pavia ; passing basilic, and shrine,
And gaze of vineyard-workers, wotting not
Yon trader was the Lord of Heathenesse.
All day he rode ; yet at the wane of day
No gleam of gate, or ramp, or rising spire,
Nor Tessin's sparkle underneath the stars
Promised him Pavia ; but he was 'ware
Of a gay company upon the way,
Ladies and lords, with horses, hawks, and hounds ;

Cap-plumes and tresses fluttered by the wind
Of merry race for home. "Go!" said the king
To one that rode upon his better hand,
"And pray these gentles of their courtesy
How many leagues to Pavia, and the gates
What hour they close them?" Then the Saracen
Set spur, and being joined to him that seemed
First of the hunt, he told the message — they
Checking the jangling bits, and chiding down
The unfinished laugh to listen — but by this
Came up the king, his bonnet in his hand,
Theirs doffed to him: "Sir Trader," Torel said
(Messer Torello 'twas, of Istria),
"They shut the Pavian gate at even-song,
And even-song is sung." Then turning half,
Muttered, "Pardie, the man is worshipful,
A stranger too!" "Fair lord!" quoth Saladin,
"Please you to stead some weary travellers,
Saying where we may lodge, the town so far
And night so near." "Of my heart, willingly,"
Made answer Torel, "I did think but now
To send my knave an errand — he shall ride
And bring you unto lodgment — oh! no thanks,

Our Lady keep you ! ” then with whispered hest
He called their guide and sped them. Being gone,
Torello told his purpose, and the band,
With ready zeal and loosened bridle-chains,
Rode for his hunting-palace, where they set
A goodly banquet underneath the planes,
And hung the house with guest-lights, and anon
Welcomed the wondering strangers, thereto led
Unwitting, by a world of winding paths ;
Messer Torello, at the inner gate,
Waiting to take them in — a goodly host,
Stamped current with God’s image for a man
Chief among men, truthful, and just, and free.

Then he, “ Well met again, fair sirs ! Our knave
Hath found you shelter better than the worst :
Please you to leave your selles, and being bathed,
Grace our poor supper here.” Then Saladin,
Whose sword had yielded ere his courtesy,
Answered, “ Great thanks, Sir Knight, and this much
blame,

You spoil us for our trade ! two bonnets doffed,
And travellers’ questions holding you afield,
For those you give us this.” “ Sir ! not your meed,

Nor worthy of your breeding ; but in sooth
That is not out of Pavia." Thereupon
He led them to fair chambers decked with all
Makes tired men glad ; lights, and the marble bath,
And flasks that sparkled, liquid amethyst,
And grapes, not dry as yet from evening dew.

Thereafter at the supper-board they sat ;
Nor lacked it, though its guest was reared a king,
Worthy provend in crafts of cookery,
Pastel, pasticcio — all set forth on gold ;
And gracious talk and pleasant courtesies,
Spoken in stately Latin, cheated time
Till there was none but held the stranger-sir,
For all his chapman's dress of cramasie,
Goodlier than silks could make him. Presently
Talk rose upon the Holy Sepulchre :
" I go myself," said Torel, " with a score
Of better knights — the flower of Pavia —
To try our steel against King Saladin's.
Sirs ! ye have seen the countries of the Sun,
Know you the Soldan ? " Answer gave the king,
" The Soldan we have seen — 'twill push him hard
If, which I nothing doubt, you Pavian lords

Are valorous as gentle ; — we, alas !
Are Cyprus merchants making trade to France —
Dull sons of Peace." "By Mary !" Torel cried,
"But for thy word, I ne'er heard speech so fit
To lead the war, nor saw a hand that sat
Liker a soldier's in the sabre's place ;
But sure I hold you sleepless !" Then himself
Playing the chamberlain, with torches borne,
Led them to restful beds, commending them
To sleep and God, who hears — Allah or God —
When good men do his creatures charities.

At dawn the cock, and neigh of saddled steeds,
Broke the king's dreams of battle — not their own,
But goodly jennets from Torello's stalls,
Caparisoned to bear them ; he their host
Up, with a gracious radiance like the sun,
To bid them speed. Beside him in the court
Stood Dame Adalieta ; comely she,
And of her port as stately, and serene
As if the braided gold about her brows
Had been a crown. Mutual good-morrow given,
Thanks said and stayed, the lady prayed her guest
To take a token of his sojourn there,

Marking her good-will, not his worthiness ;
" A gown of miniver — these furbelows
Are silk I spun — my lord wears ever such —
A housewife's gift ! but those ye love are far ;
Wear it as given for them." Then Saladin —
" A queenly gift, Madonna, past my thanks ;
And — but thou shalt not hear a ' no ' from me —
Past my receiving ; yet I take it ; we
Were debtors to your noble courtesy
Out of redemption — this but bankrupts us."
" Nay, sir, — God shield you ! " said the knight and dame.
And Saladin, with phrase of gentillesse
Returned, or ever that he rode alone,
Swore a great oath in guttural Arabic,
An oath by Allah — startling up the ears
Of those three Christian cattle they bestrode —
That never yet was nobler-natured man,
Nor gentler lady ; — and that time should see
For a king's lodging quittance royal repaid.

It was the day of the Passaggio :
Ashore the war-steeds champed the burnished bit ;

Afloat the galleys tugged the mooring-chain :
The town was out ; the Lombard armorers —
Red-hot with riveting the helmets up,
And whetting axes for the heathen heads —
Cooled in the crowd that filled the squares and streets
To speed God's soldiers. At the none that day
Messer Torello to the gate came down,
Leading his lady ; — sorrow's hueless rose
Grew on her cheek, and thrice the destrier
Struck fire, impatient, from the pavement-squares,
Or ere she spoke, tears in her lifted eyes,
“Goest thou, lord of mine?” “Madonna, yes!”
Said Torel, “for my soul's weal and the Lord
Ride I to-day : my good name and my house
Reliant I intrust thee, and — because
It may be they shall slay me, and because,
Being so young, so fair, and so reputed,
The noblest will entreat thee — wait for me,
Widow or wife, a year, and month, and day ;
Then if thy kinsmen press thee to a choice,
And if I be not come, hold me for dead ;
Nor link thy blooming beauty with the grave
Against thine heart.” “Good my lord!” answered she,

“Hardly my heart sustains to let thee go ;
Thy memory it can keep, and keep it will,
Though my one lord, Torel of Istria,
Live, or —— ” “Sweet, comfort thee ! San Pietro
speed !

I shall come home : if not, and worthy knees
Bend for this hand, whereof none worthy lives,
Least he who lays his last kiss thus upon it,
Look thee, I free it —— ” “Nay !” she said, “but I,
A petulant slave that hugs her golden chain,
Give that gift back, and with it this poor ring :
Set it upon thy sword-hand, and in fight
Be merciful and win, thinking of me.”
Then she, with pretty action, drawing on
Her ruby, buckled over it his glove —
The great steel glove — and through the helmet bars
Took her last kiss ; — then let the chafing steed
Have its hot will and go.

But Saladin,
Safe back among his lords at Lebanon,
Well wotting of their quest, awaited it,
And held the Crescent up against the Cross.
In many a doughty fight Ferrara blades

Clashed with keen Damasc, many a weary month
Wasted afield ; but yet the Christians
Won nothing nearer to Christ's sepulchre ;
Nay, but gave ground. At last, in Acre pent,
On their loose files, enfeebled by the war,
Came stronger smiter than the Saracen —
The deadly Pest : day after day they died,
Pikeman and knight-at-arms ; day after day
A thinner line upon the leaguered wall
Held off the heathen : — held them off a space ;
Then, over-weakened, yielded, and gave up
The city and the stricken garrison.

So to sad chains and hateful servitude
Fell all those purple lords — Christendom's stars,
Once high in hope as soaring Lucifer,
Now low as sinking Hesper : with them fell
Messer Torello — never one so poor
Of all the hundreds that his bounty fed
As he in prison — ill-entreated, bound,
Starved of sweet light, and set to shameful tasks ;
And that great load at heart to know the days
Fast flying, and to live accounted dead.
One joy his gaolers left him, — his good hawk ;

The brave, gay bird that crossed the seas with him :
And often, in the mindful hour of eve,
With tameless eye and spirit masterful,
In a feigned anger checking at his hand,
The good gray falcon made his master cheer.

One day it chanced Saladin rode afield
With shawled and turbaned Amirs, and his hawks —
Lebanon-bred, and mewed as princes lodge —
Flew foul, forgot their feather, hung at wrist,
And slighted call. The Soldan, quick in wrath,
Bade slay the cravens, scourge the falconer,
And seek some wight who knew the heart of hawks,
To keep it hot and true. Then spake a Sheikh —
“There is a Frank in prison by the sea,
Far-seen herein.” “Give word that he be brought,”
Quoth Saladin, “and bid him set a cast :
If he hath skill, it shall go well for him.”

Thus by the winding path of circumstance
One palace held, as prisoner and prince,
Torello and his guest : unwitting each,
Nay and unwitting, though they met and spake

Of that goshawk and this — signors in serge,
And chapmen crowned, who knows? — till on a time
Some trick of face, the manner of some smile,
Some gleam of sunset from the glad day gone,
Caught the king's eye, and held it. "Nazarene!
What native art thou?" asked he. "Lombard I,
A man of Pavia." "And thy name?" "Torel,
Messer Torello called in happier times,
Now best uncalled." "Come hither, Christian!"
The Soldan said, and led the way, by court
And hall and fountain, to an inner room
Rich with king's robes: therefrom he reached a gown,
And "Know'st thou this?" he asked. "High lord! I
might
Elsewhere," quoth Torel, "here 'twere mad to say
Yon gown my wife unto a trader gave
That shared our board." "Nay, but that gown is this,
And she the giver, and the trader I,"
Quoth Saladin; "I! twice a king to-day,
Owing a royal debt and paying it."
Then Torel, sore amazed, "Great lord, I blush,
Remembering how the Master of the East
Lodged sorrily," "It's Master's Master thou!"

Gave answer Saladin, "come in and see
What wares the Cyprus traders keep at home ;
Come forth and take thy place, Saladin's friend."
Therewith into the circle of his lords,
With gracious mien the Soldan led his slave ;
And while the dark eyes glittered, seated him
First of the full divan. "Orient lords,"
So spake he, — "let the one who loves his king
Honor this Frank, whose house sheltered your king ;
He is my brother : " then the night-black beards
Swept the stone floor in ready reverence,
Agas and Amirs welcoming Torel :
And a great feast was set, the Soldan's friend
Royally garbed, upon the Soldan's hand,
Shining the bright star of the banqueters.

All which, and the abounding grace and love
Shown him by Saladin, a little held
The heart of Torel from its Lombard home
With Dame Adalieta : but it chanced
He sat beside the king in audience,
And there came one who said, "Oh, Lord of lords,

That galley of the Genovese which sailed
With Frankish prisoners is gone down at sea."
"Gone down!" cried Torel. "Ay! what reck's it,
friend,
To fall thy visage for?" quoth Saladin;
"One galley less to ship-stuffed Genoa!"
"Good my liege!" Torel said, "it bore a scroll
Inscribed to Pavia, saying that I lived;
For in a year, a month, and day, not come,
I bade them hold me dead; and dead I am,
Albeit living, if my lady wed,
Perchance constrained." "Certes," spake Saladin,
"A noble dame — the like not won, once lost —
How many days remain?" "Ten days, my prince,
And twelvescore leagues between my heart and me:
Alas! how to be passed?" Then Saladin —
"Lo! I am loath to lose thee — wilt thou swear
To come again if all go well with thee,
Or come ill speeding?" "Yea, I swear, my king,
Out of true love," quoth Torel, "heartfully."
Then Saladin, "Take here my signet-seal;
My admiral will loose his swiftest sail
Upon its sight; and cleave the seas, and go

And clip thy dame, and say the Trader sends
A gift, remindful of her courtesies."

Passed were the year, and month, and day ; and passed
Out of all hearts but one Sir Torel's name,
Long given for dead by ransomed Pavians :
For Pavia, thoughtless of her Eastern graves,
A lovely widow, much too gay for grief,
Made peals from half a hundred campaniles
To ring a wedding in. The seven bells
Of Santo Pietro, from the nones to noon,
Boomed with bronze throats the happy tidings out ;
Till the great tenor, overswelled with sound,
Cracked itself dumb. Thereat the sacristan,
Leading his swinkèd ringers down the stairs,
Came blinking into sunlight — all his keys
Jingling their little peal about his belt —
Whom, as he tarried, locking up the porch,
A foreign signor, browned with southern suns,
Turbaned and slippered, as the Muslims use,
Plucked by the cope. "Friend," quoth he — 'twas a
tongue
Italian true, but in a Muslim mouth —
"Why are your belfries busy — is it peace

Or victory, that so ye din the ears
Of Pavian lieges?" "Truly, no liege thou!"
Grunted the sacristan, "who knowest not
That Dame Adalieta weds to-night
Her fore-betrothed, — Sir Torel's widow she,
That died i' the chain?" "To-night!" the stranger said.
"Ay, sir, to-night! — why not to-night? — to-night!
And you shall see a goodly Christian feast
If so you pass their gates at even-song,
For all are asked."

No more the questioner,
But folded o'er his face the Eastern hood,
Lest idle eyes should mark how idle words
Had struck him home. "So quite forgot! — so soon! —
And this the square wherein I gave the joust,
And that the loggia, where I fed the poor;
And yon my palace, where — oh, fair! oh, false! —
They robe her for a bridal. Can it be?
Clean out of heart, with twice six flying moons,
The heart that beat on mine as it would break,
That faltered forty oaths. Forced! forced! — not false —
Well! I will sit, wife, at thy wedding-feast,
And let mine eyes give my fond faith the lie."

So in the stream of gallant guests that flowed
Feastward at eve, went Torel ; passed with them
The outer gates, crossed the great courts with them,
A stranger in the walls that called him lord.
Cressets and colored lamps made the way bright,
And rose-leaves strewed to where within the doors
The master of the feast, the bridegroom, stood,
A-glitter from his forehead to his foot,
Speaking fair welcomes. He, a courtly lord,
Marking the Eastern guest, bespoke him fair,
Prayed place for him, and bade them set his seat
Upon the dais. Then the feast began,
And wine went free as wit, and music died —
Outdone by merrier laughter : — only one
Nor ate nor drank, nor spoke nor smiled ; but gazed
On the pale bride, pale as her crown of pearls,
Who sate so cold and still, and sad of cheer,
At the bride-feast.

But of a truth, Torel
Read the thoughts right that held her eyelids down,
And knew her loyal to her memories.
Then to a little page who bore the wine,
He spake, “ Go tell thy lady thus from me :

In mine own land, if any stranger sit
A wedding-guest, the bride, out of her grace,
In token that she knows her guest's good-will,
In token she repays it, brims a cup,
Wherefrom he drinking she in turn doth drink ;
So is our use." The little page made speed
And told the message. Then that lady pale —
Ever a gentle and a courteous heart —
Lifted her troubled eyes and smiled consent
On the swart stranger. By her side, untouched,
Stood the brimmed gold ; " Bear this," she said, " and pray
He hold a Christian lady apt to learn
A kindly lesson." But Sir Torel loosed
From off his finger — never loosed before —
The ring she gave him on the parting day ;
And ere he drank, behind his veil of beard
Dropped in the cup the ruby, quaffed, and sent. —
Then she, with sad smile, set her lips to drink,
And — something in the Cyprus touching them,
Glanced — gazed — the ring ! — her ring ! — Jove ! how
 she eyes
The wistful eyes of Torel ! — how, heartsure,
Under all guise knowing her lord returned,

She springs to meet him coming ! — telling all
In one great cry of joy.

O me ! the rout,
The storm of questions ! stilled, when Torel spake
His name, and, known of all, claimed the Bride Wife,
Maugre the wasted feast, and woful groom.
All hearts but his were light to see Torel ;
But Adalieta's lightest, as she plucked
The bridal-veil away. Something therein —
A lady's dagger — small, and bright, and fine —
Clashed out upon the marble. "Wherefore that?"
Asked Torel ; answered she, "I knew you true ;
And I could live, so long as I might wait ;
But they — they pressed me hard ! my days of grace
Ended to-night — and I had ended too,
Faithful to death, if so thou hadst not come."

THE CALIPH'S DRAUGHT.

UPON a day in Ramadan —
 When sunset brought an end of fast,
And in his station every man
 Prepared to share the glad repast —
Sate Mohtasim in royal state,
 The pillaw smoked upon the gold ;
The fairest slave of those that wait
 Mohtasim's jewelled cup did hold.

Of crystal carven was the cup,
 With turquoise set along the brim,
A lid of amber closed it up ;
 'Twas a great king that gave it him.
The slave poured sherbet to the brink,
 Stirred in wild honey and pomegranate,
With snow and rose-leaves cooled the drink,
 And bore it where the Caliph sate.

The Caliph's mouth was dry as bone,
He swept his beard aside to quaff : —
The news-reader beneath the throne,
Went droning on with *ghain* and *kaf*. —
The Caliph drew a mighty breath,
Just then the reader read a word —
And Mohtasim, as grim as death,
Set down the cup and snatched his sword.

"Ann' amratan shureefatee !"

"Speak clear !" cries angry Mohtasim ;

"Fe lasr ind' ilj min ulji," —

Trembling the newsman read to him
How in Ammoriam, far from home,
An Arab girl of noble race
Was captive to a lord of Roum ;
And how he smote her on the face,

And how she cried, for life afraid,

"Ya, Mohtasim ! help, O my king !"

And how the Kafir mocked the maid,
And laughed, and spake a bitter thing,

"Call louder, fool ! Mohtasim's ears
Are long as Barak's — if he heed —
Your prophet's ass ; and when he hears,
He 'll come upon a spotted steed !"

The Caliph's face was stern and red,
He snapped the lid upon the cup ;
"Keep this same sherbet, slave," he said,
"Till such time as I drink it up.
Wallah ! the stream my drink shall be,
My hollowed palm my only bowl,
Till I have set that lady free,
And seen that Roumi dog's head roll."

At dawn the drums of war were beat,
Proclaiming, "Thus saith Mohtasim,
'Let all my valiant horsemen meet,
And every soldier bring with him
A spotted steed.' " So rode they forth,
A sight of marvel and of fear ;
Pied horses prancing fiercely north,
Three lakhs — the cup borne in the rear !

When to Ammoria he did win,
He smote and drove the dogs of Roum,
And rode his spotted stallion in,
Crying, "*Labbayki* ! I am come !"
Then downward from her prison-place
Joyful the Arab lady crept ;
She held her hair before her face,
She kissed his feet, she laughed and wept.

She pointed where that lord was laid :
They drew him forth, he whined for grace :
Then with fierce eyes Mohtasim said —
"She whom thou smotest on the face
Had scorn, because she called her king :
Lo ! he is come ! and dost thou think
To live, who didst this bitter thing '
While Mohtasim at peace did drink ?"

Flashed the fierce sword — rolled the lord's head ;
The wicked blood smoked in the sand.
"Now bring my cup !" the Caliph said.
Lightly he took it in his hand,

As down his throat the sweet drink ran
Mohtasim in his saddle laughed,
And cried, "*Taiba asshrab alan !*
By God ! delicious is this draught !"

“Λόχνον, ἔρωτος ἄγαλμα, γαμοστόλον ἄστρον ἔρωτος”

HERO AND LEANDER.

FROM THE GREEK OF MUSÆUS.



SING, Muse ! the signal lamp, gleaming above,
That lit the nightly swimmer to his Love ;
The unseen pathway of the silent tide
That bore the bridegroom to his watchful bride ;
The salt-soaked marriage robes, the moist embrace ;
Abydos' town, and Sestos, Hero's place ;
Longing Leander, on the black waves' crest,
Eyeing the light that led to Hero's breast ;
Kind light — Love's aster ! — which the mighty Jove
Might well have taken to the orbs above,
And set it shining in the spangled sky
To be Love's star of all Heaven's company ;

Seeing it was the planet of their bliss,
The glittering summons to the sleepless kiss,
Till the hard tempest ended him and this. }
Help, then, high Muse ! and teach me how to sing
Leander's death, and lamp's extinguishing.

Sestos and white Abydos — cities twain —
Fronted each other over Helle's main ;
And there God Eros, setting notch to string,
Wounded two bosoms with one shaft-shooting,
A maiden's and a youth's — Leander he,
And lovely Hero, Sestos' sweetest, she ;
She of her town, and he of his, the boast ;
A noble pair ! If ever to that coast
Thou wendest, ask for Hero's tower, and come
Where she Love's lighthouse nightly did illumine ;
Inquire for white Abydos, too, and muse
Where young Leander life and love did lose ;
But now to tell how he fair Hero loved,
And how the maid to dote on him was moved.

Honey-sweet Hero, of a princely race,
Was priestess to Queen Venus in that place ;

And at her father's tower, by the sea set —
Herself a Queen of Love, though maiden yet —
Dwelt ; yet, for modesty and gracious shame,
She never to the city markets came ;
Nor mingled at the vintage in the dance,
Lest envious eyes upon her path should glance ; —
For evil ones will flout at fairer faces, —
But ever, in the holy temple-spaces,
She worshipped foam-born Venus, Queen above,
And Eros eke, the tiny Lord of Love,
Beseeching that she might unscathed go ;
Yet none the more 'scaped she delicious woe.

It was the time of the great offering
Made with high pomp at Sestos in the spring
To Venus and Adonis, and each year
A merry crowd did come from far and near
To keep this feast : all they that have their home
Upon the rounded islets ringed with foam
In Marmora and westward ; — Hæmony,
And Cyprus, sent them, and the Cretan sea ;
Cythera, Phrygia, Libanus ; — with these
The nigher towns and cities swarmed like bees

To see the show ; but most of all the youth : —
Ever they throng where feasts are ! — to tell truth,
'Tis not, methinks, the shrine which draws them so, —
To see the maidens those light pilgrims go !

And Hero, eke, went up unto the shrine,
Her face of alabaster all a-shine
Like the pure moon when first it swims the sky ;
Nathless her cheek was touched with tender dye
Such as new rose-buds have — not white nor red,
But sunlit-snow : in sooth you would have said
She was all made of rose-leaves, she did show
So fair and fine under her thin gown's flow,
Such rose-leaf arms ! such roseate shoulders ! — see !
Of old, they said, the Graces were but three ;
Yet each sweet charm of Hero, as it seemed,
With love-spells of a hundred Graces gleamed.
Well was she worthy to be Venus' maid !

And even as she walked — stately and staid,
Liker a goddess than a priestess, fair
Beyond the fairest — Hero, unaware,
Took all eyes after her : no youth that day
But his heart beat as Hero passed that way,

Wishing such heavenly beauty his might be.
Thus, up the steps to the great Temple, she
Drew still the looks, the thoughts, the sighs of men ;
And one among the strangers whispered then : —

“ Gods ! — Helen’s town I’ve seen, and Sparta’s dames,
“ Whose charms make wars and give the world to flames ;
“ But never saw I one that could compare
“ With form so goddess-like and face so rare ; —
“ Queen Venus sure hath made the youngest Grace
“ Her minister this morn ! oh, happy place
“ Which owns her ! I could gaze until I die !
“ Would Zeus but grant me Hero, not his sky
“ Could tempt me to a wish ! I would not be
“ A God, so Hero were but wife to me !
“ Since she is sacred and past mortal prayer,
“ Heaven send me soon a woman half so fair.”

Thus he, and others passioned otherwise,
Heart-stricken by the light of Hero’s eyes.

But thou, Leander ! when those bright eyes shone
One instant on thee, of the youths alone, —

Beyond wild words, beyond fond wishes — felt
The heart within thee by love's magic melt.
Others to win her wafted many a sigh,
He alone knew that he must have or die.
In one brief glance love's lightning-flash did smite
All senses senseless with strange deep delight
Left thrilling, when her silken lashes sank,
And veiled the perilous glory his eyes drank.
What lightning strikes, in sooth, like a fair face?
What arrow pierces like a woman's grace?
'Tis the eyes slay, thence fly the subtle darts
Which deal swift wounds and hurt unguarded hearts.
So with Leander; in his bosom strove
Passion with shame, and fear with forward love:
He trembled, and then blushed to tremble so;
And vexed at blushing, straight did venturous grow;
Eros at his heart's ear whispering amain
To lay shame by and speak: so was he fain
To steal a little closer, till he stood
Foot to foot with her: then in daring mood
Sidelong he glanced and murmured half a word,
And checked it to a sigh, itself half heard:
Glance, word, and sigh so tender-timid were,

Their silent speaking could not anger her ;
Nay, but it pleased ! that gentle stratagem
To tell the love which burned so plain in him ;
And seeming to see naught, she saw, and bent
Her sweet head from him — not in discontent ;
And seeming not to hear, she heard, and sighed
A little silver sigh of pleased pride ;
By signs unwitting giving him to know
It was not anger set her cheeks a-glow ;
Then turned, ashamed of nothing ; — but the boy
Knew that she knew, and all his heart was joy.

So, while he lingered, one slight word to win,
Day — nigh to setting — drew her splendors in ;
And shadow-loving Hesperus shone high,
Faint-seen upon the violet eastern sky :
Whereat, — the merry crowd thickening for home —
With desperate courage closer hath he come ;
So close, he touched her rosy opened hand,
Heaving a deep sigh, plain to understand ;
And she, as one an angered, drew it in,
But so that he might see 'twas no great sin ;
Then, bolder, by her stole he took the maid,

And drew imploring towards the Temple's shade ;
Whereat, with pretty frown and faltering feet,
She followed, while she said, in chiding sweet,

“ Sir, are you mad ? how dare you hold me so ?
“ Leave plucking at my gown, and let me go !
“ If those who loved me saw, 'twould cost you dear ;
“ Besides, I am a holy priestess here,
“ Vowed to Queen Venus ! are you not afraid
“ To stay me so, and I, an honest maid ? ”

Thus, as the manner of all maidens is,
Her soft lips rated, though her heart was his ;
And he by love's quick instinct knew it so,
And let her dear delicious accents flow
In anger musical, for when maids scold,
With looks that pardon, lovers may be bold :
But when she ceased and stood, he bent his head
Close to her pearly fragrant nape, and said,
With lips which trembled like his trembling heart,

“ Oh, Maid ! — oh, Marvel ! — if of earth thou art
“ And not a goddess, not divine — to me

“Pallas or Cytheræa thou might'st be !
“Art thou not sprung indeed of heavenly birth?
“Scarce dare I deem thee denizen of earth !
“But if of earth, ah, me ! how godlike then
“He who begot thee, of all mortal men !
“How happy beyond happy mothers she
“Who bore and nursed thee, sweet one, on her knee ;
“And if of earth — oh ! be of earth, and hear
“My pleading lips, my earnest humble prayer !
“Since thou art Venus' priestess, then take heed
“Thou vex her not by cruel word and deed ;
“Be what thou seem'st by reverencing this shrine,
“The glory of thy Goddess should be thine ;
“She liketh not a votary cold and coy —
“Love is her worship, and her service joy :
“If thou would'st keep her tender, high decree,
“My earnest passion should not anger thee,
“Being so born for worship : therefore thou,
“If thou lov'st Venus, listen to me now.
“Dear servant of this temple — I am thine !
“As thou dost pray, I pray ; ah ! then, incline —
“As thou dost ask thy goddess — pitying ears
“Unto this suppliant sad with hopes and fears,

"Wounded by love, and captive at thy feet,
"As when, with wand of gold, Hermes the fleet
"Brought Hercules — the strongest that could be —
"Meek to the footstool of Queen Omphale.
"Me Aphrodite, and not Hermes, sent ;
"Think how thy goddess made that one repent,
"Arcadian Atalanta, she who vowed
"To die a maid, rejecting — cold and proud —
"Hippomenes ; and yet it did befall
"She grew to love him — heart, soul, mind, and all ;
"Yea ! even to frenzy — whom she did not love :
"Oh, Sweet ! be wise, nor Venus' anger move."

So, with soft flood of loving argument,
From coy reserve to yielding thoughts he bent
The maiden's mind ; but she, as maidens will,
Albeit convinced at heart, stood speechless still ;
Her lustrous eyes upon the ground fast set,
And hot face turned to hide the blush on it.
Now with one sandal-tip the grass she beat,
Now drew it back, close-wrapped from head to feet,
Nought answering ; yet all these were signs to bless,
And silence — well he knew — is woman's yes ;

She, too, was hurt with Eros' fatal dart ;
His soft flame flickered in her virgin heart ;
Spite of herself it fluttered with delight
To mark how fair he was — how bold — how bright ;
And while her eyes stole from the ground to his
And back again, he stood 'tween woe and bliss,
Devouring still, with gaze she did not check,
The flower-bright flushing of her face and neck ;
Till at the last she found some breath to speak,
While, pearl by pearl, tears glimmered down her cheek.

“ Friend ! were I marble, I must answer thee.
“ Who taught thee such deep eloquence ? Ah, me !
“ Who brought thee hither, and procured us pain ?
“ For all these sweet things said are said in vain.
“ How should a stranger — never seen or known —
“ Win me in marriage — if I would be won ?
“ Thou could'st not ask me openly for wife,
“ My parents would not give me ; and 'twere rife
“ With untold dangers if you lingered here
“ To meet me secretly ; for all is ear,
“ All eye in Sestos ! Things in silence done
“ Are said next morning at the market-stone.

"But tell me — and tell true — what town is thine,
"And whence thy birth and name? Thou knowest mine,
"Hero of Sestos ; yonder is my home,
"In that tall tower whose foot stands in the foam ;
"And there I dwell alone — but for one slave —
"Outside the walls, over the breaking wave ;
"Having no neighbor but the rolling sea !
"No song but his rude music ! none to be
"Friend or companion ! all the seasons there
"The thunder of the mournful main I hear."

So much she said — then stayed herself, and drew
The gown before her cheek to hide its hue,
And chid herself for speaking, sore ashamed :
But he — rejoiced because her words proclaimed
Hope of the prize — went meditating hard
How he should run to win the dear reward.
For Love hath many wiles to heal the heart
Of those that bleed with his unshunn'd dart ;
And, of himself, will counsel oft afford
To those of whom th' Almighty Boy is Lord :
So to Leander's heart he whispered low
A way to bliss, albeit the end was woe.

“Sweet ! for thy love,” he cried, “the sea I’d cleave,
“Though foam were fire, and waves with flame did heave,
“I fear not billows if they bear to thee ;
“Nor tremble at the hissing of the sea !
“And I will come — oh ! let me come — each night,
“Swimming the swift flood to my dear delight :
“For white Abydos, where I live, doth front
“Thy city here, across our Hellespont.
“Do but this thing, set thine own lamp on high,
“To shine at evening through the dark’ling sky,
“And I will be Love’s ship — my pilot-star
“That beam, whereto, oaring my way afar,
“I shall not see Bootes, nor his wain,
“And bright Orion will be bright in vain.
“Only take heed, Dear, of the winds, and shield
“The light, that when I toil, by waves concealed,
“It be not quenched by any envious blast,
“Lest I go down — a ship and venture lost :
“Sweetheart ! do this : my name if thou dost sue,
“I am Leander, Hero’s lover true.”

Nothing she answered, save by one soft kiss,
Which sealed the contract of their sudden bliss ;

Then lip to lip they plighted faith for life,
He to be husband leal, she loving wife,
Albeit unwed ; and also did agree
That she should light the lamp, he swim the sea.
All which deep bargain being got by heart,
With lingering words and looks they tore apart, —
She to her tower ; he through the gathering gloom,
Noting the landmarks, joyfully is come
Down to the beach, and ships with th' others there
For white Abydos, with its ramparts fair ;
Then waits till night gives him his new-won bride,
And Hero watches on the other side.

Soon o'er the sky Eve's purple curtains creep,
To all but young Leander bringing sleep :
He, when the darkness deepened, eager stood
Beside the white marge of the rolling flood,
His eyes quick searching through the hollow night,
To see the first flash of his lady's light ;
Far-shining light, that gleams to make him blest !
Dear light, that guides to Hero's beating breast !
She, when the darkness covered land and sea,
Kindled her lamp, and set it. Instantly

Love with that spark lighted Leander's soul ;
Eager he hailed the beam ; yet loud did roll
The thundering breakers on the shingly shore ;—
The first wave something chilled ;— but love is more
Than fear ; he laid his outer garb aside,
And spake unto himself by the cold tide :

“Awful is love, and dreadful is the sea,
“But fire is more than water unto me ;
“And this that burns is stronger than much brine :
“Think most of Eros, foolish heart of mine !
“Care not for tumbling billows ; let us go
“Straight over them to Hero ; why shrink so ?
“Hast thou forgotten that Queen Venus came
“Forth from the floods, and ever rules the same ?”

Then with both hands from off his fair, smooth skin
He stripped his cloth, and tied his long locks in ;
And ran upon the reef, and sprang, and clove
The keen salt waves. So, swimming to his love,
He steered with face set hard where that ray shone,
Ship — pilot — rower — merchant, all in one.

Hero, the while, upon her turret-stair,
Guarded the beacon-lamp from every air ;
Spreading her gown that side and this, to keep
The breezes off ; but when, up from the deep,
Leander, breathless, came safe to the strand,
Down flew she to the sea-gate — caught his hand —
In gladness past all words, her white arms flung
Round him, and on his heaving bosom hung ;
And led him from the cold and foamy beach
Up to her tower ; and when her room they reach,
She wiped his pearly body clean of brine,
And took the salt smell off with unguents fine,
Stained with rose-essences and scented rare,
And then she clothed him in her long dark hair,
Yet panting from his voyage ; while in his ear
She poured these dulcet accents : —

“ Husband dear !

“ Sore thou hast toiled, as never one save thee

“ Battling the horrid deep, to come to me ;

“ Forget upon my lips the wave's harsh taste,

“ The fierce sea-monsters and the roaring waste ;

“ The port is reached ! Anchor, dear ship ! and have

“ The goods you sailed for in your Hero's love.”

With that soft leave he loosed her virgin zone,
And took her — pure and perfect — for his own.
No marriage-rite, no festal-dance was there,
None raised the hymn to Herë for the pair ;
No nuptial-torches blazed around the bed,
The merry long procession was not led ;
No sire the hymenæal blessing spoke,
No tender mother “ Hymen ” did invoke ;
But Silence spread their wedding-couch ; and she
Drew the close curtains of their ecstasy ;
The Night wore all her starry gems of pride,
To be bridesmaid to that peerless bride ;
Hesper kept watch, and lingered over long,
Lest Dawn should find him there, and do them
wrong.

Dawn never saw Leander ! ere 'twas grey
To still Abydos' walls he made his way,
Full of love's comfort, but insatiate yet ;
While Hero in her turret did forget
All things save him — in that one day of life
Changed soul and body, grown from maid to wife ;
And mightily did each on either shore
Pray dusk to come and daylight to be o'er.

Thus many a summer night they met unseen,
And had great bliss of love from Venus queen :
But no joy long endureth, and not long
Lived theirs, the gentle lovers of my song ;
For Winter came apace, with snow and frost,
And wild storms whistling up and down the coast :
Lashed to its depths the tortured ocean shrank,
While the wind drove its billows, rank on rank,
Scourging their crests milk-white ; all sailors then
Drew up their ships upon the shore, for men
Fear the fierce winter and the furious sea ;
But no fear, young Leander, hindered thee !
As oft as Hero showed the guiding light
So oft, through storm, and foam, and murky night,
Swam he with steadfast passion to that guide,
Daring the dangers of the sweeping tide.
Ah ! Hero, wherefore call o'er such a sea ?
Too fond thou wert ; too bold and faithful he !
Thou should'st have left unlit thy lamp of love,
And waited till kind spring made green the grove ;
But love and fate compelled her ! so, o'ercome,
She set her light, and lured him to his doom.

There came one night, the wildest of the year,

When the wind smote like edge of hissing spear,
And the pale breakers thundered on the beach ;
While in mid-sea Leander toiled to reach
The far off haven of his Hero's breast.
Sore-tossed he was from raging crest to crest ;
Billow on billow rolled, the great seas roared
Furiously leaping to the clouds, which poured
Sleet and brine back, with scream of winds that met
Midway from all the quarters : — Eurus set
His blast against the West Wind ; Notus blew
His cheeks to bursting, Boreas to subdue.
Ceaseless the tumult of the tempest was,
And young Leander in its midst, alas !
Battling th' inexorable bitter sea,
Called on the gods in his calamity.
To foam-born Venus many a prayer he made,
And oft the name of great Poseidon said ;
And oft grim Boreas he did implore
For Orithyia's sake to help him o'er.
Nothing he gained ! Fate was too strong for Love !
The chill spray-laden storm beat him above ;
Below, the monstrous buffets of the sea
Struck the strength from him ; till, all helplessly,

His feet drooped down, relinquishing the strife,
Though his poor hands kept feebly on for life.
O'er lip and nostril now the salt waves clomb ;
Gasping for breath, he breathed but choking foam ;
Yet gleamed that light, and still he strove for shore :
Sudden — a cruel gust blew ! — all was o'er !
The gust extinguished Hero's lamp ; the sea
Hid young Leander and his agony.

Hero, when that he came not, watched all night,
Into the darkness straining hard her sight ;
And morning breaking — and no sign of him —
With aching heart she scanned the sea-face dim,
Fearing to look, because that lamp went out.
He was not there ! but, casting still about,
Lo ! — at the turret's foot his body lay,
Rolled on the stones, and soaked with breaking spray !
She rent her robe upon her, and leaped down
Headlong, distracted, from the turret's crown.
There on his corpse she breathed her dying breath ;
And, linked in life, those two were one in death.

“*Ἔρως δ' οὐκ ἤρκεσε Μολπᾶς.*”

THE FEAST OF BELSHAZZAR.

(This poem gained the Newdigate Prize in the University of Oxford in 1852.)

SYNOPSIS.

"Belshazzar's impious feast; a handwriting, unknown to the magicians, troubleth the king. At the commendation of the queen, Daniel is brought. He, reproving the king of pride and idolatry, readeth and interpreteth the writing. The monarchy is translated to the Medes." *Daniel*, ch. 5.

ἀλλ' ἴσθι τοι τὰ σκληρὰ ἄγαν φρονήματα
πίπτειν μάλιστα.

NOR by one portal, or one path alone
God's holy messages to men are known ;
Waiting the glances of his awful eyes
Silver-winged Seraphs do him embassies ;
And stars interpreting his high behest
Guide the lone feet and glad the failing breast :
The rolling thunder and the raging sea
Speak the stern purpose of the Deity,

And storms beneath and rainbow hues above
Herald his anger or proclaim his love :
The still small voices of the summer day,
The red Sirocco and the breath of May,
The lingering harmony in Ocean shells,
The fairy music of the meadow bells,
Earth and void Air — Water and wasting Flame
Have words to whisper, tongues to tell his name.
Once — with no cloak of careful mystery
Himself was herald of his own decree ;
The hand that edicts on the marble drew
Graved the stern sentence of their scorner too.
Listen and learn ! Tyrants have heard the tale,
And turned from hearing terror-struck and pale,
Spiritless captives sinking with the chain
Have read this page and taken heart again. —

From sunlight unto starlight trumpets told
Her King's command in Babylon the old,
From sunlight unto starlight, west and east,
A thousand satraps girt them for the feast,
And reined their chargers to the palace hall
Where King Belshazzar held high festival :

A pleasant palace under pleasant skies
With cloistered courts and gilded galleries,
And gay kiosk and painted balustrade
For winter terraces and summer shade ;
By court and terrace, minaret and dome,
Euphrates, rushing from his mountain home,
Rested his rage, and curbed his crested pride
To belt that palace with his bluest tide ;
Broad-fronted bulls with chiselled feathers barred
In silent vigil keeping watch and ward,
Giants of granite wrought by cunning hand
Guard in the gate and frown upon the land :
Not summer's glow nor yellow autumn's glare
Pierced the broad tamarisks that blossomed there ;
The moonbeam darting through their leafy screen
Lost half its silver in the softened green,
And fell with lessened lustre, broken light,
Tracing quaint arabesque of dark and white ;
Or dimly tinting on the graven stones
The pictured annals of Chaldæan thrones. —
There, from the rising to the setting day
Birds of bright feather sang the light away,

And fountain waters on the palace-floor
Made even answer to the river's roar,
Rising in silver from the crystal well
And breaking into spangles as they fell ;
Though now ye heard them not — for far along
Rang the broad chorus of the banquet song,
And sounds as gentle, echoes soft as these
Died out of hearing from the revelries.

High on a throne of ivory and gold,
From crown to footstool clad in purple fold,
Lord of the east from sea to distant sea
The king Belshazzar feasteth royally —
And not that dreamer in the desert cave
Peopled his paradise with pomp as brave :
Vessels of silver, cups of crusted gold
Blush with a brighter red than all they hold ;
Pendulous lamps like planets of the night
Flung on the diadems a fragrant light,
Or slowly swinging in the midnight sky
Gilded the ripples as they glided by : —
And sweet and sweeter rang the cittern-string
Soft as the beating of a Seraph's wing,

And swift and swifter in the measured dance
The tresses gather and the sandals glance,
And bright and brighter at the festal board
The flagons bubble and the wines are poured ;
No lack of goodly company was there,
No lack of laughing eyes to light the cheer ;
From Dara trooped they, from Daremma's grove
The suns of battle and the moons of love ;
From where Arsissa's silver waters sleep
To Imla's marshes and the inland deep,
From pleasant Calah and from Sittacene
The horseman's captain and the Harem's queen, —

It seemed no summer-cloud of passing woe
Could fling its shadow on so fair a show —
It seemed the gallant forms that feasted there
Were all too grand for woe, too great for care : —
Whence came the anxious eye, the altered tone,
The dull presentiment no heart would own,
That ever changed the smiling to a sigh
Sudden as sea-bird flashing from the sky : —
It is not that they know the spoiler waits
Harnessed for battle at the brazen gates,

It is not that they hear the watchman's call
Mark the slow minutes on the leaguered wall,
The clash of quivers and the ring of spears
Make pleasant music in a soldier's ears,
And not a scabbard hideth sword to-night
That hath not glimmered in the front of fight:—
May not the blood in every beating vein
Have quick foreknowledge of the coming pain?
Even as the prisoned silver,* dead and dumb
Shrinks at cold Winter's footfall ere he come.—

The king hath felt it and the heart's unrest
Heaved the broad purple of his belted breast;
Sudden he speaks — "What! doth the beaded juice
"Savor like hyssop that ye scorn its use?
"Wear ye so pitiful and sad a soul
"That tramp of foeman scares ye from the bowl?
"Think ye the gods on yonder starry floor
"Tremble for terror, when the thunders roar?
"Are we not gods? have we not fought with God?
"And shall we shiver at a robber's nod?

* The quicksilver in the tube of the thermometer.

“No — let them batter till the brazen bars
“Ring merry mocking of their idle wars —
“Their fall is fated for to-morrow’s sun,
“The lion rouses when his feast is done: —
“Crown me a cup — and fill the bowls we brought
“From Judah’s temple when the fight was fought —
“Drink, till the merry madness fill the soul
“To Salem’s conqueror in Salem’s bowl —
“Each from the goblet of a God shall sip
“And Judah’s gold tread heavy on the lip.” *

The last loud answer dies along the line,
The last light bubble bursts upon the wine,
His eager lips are on the jewelled brink,
Hath the cup poison that he doubts to drink?
Is there a spell upon the sparkling gold,
That so his fevered fingers quit their hold?
Whom sees he where he gazes? what is there
Freezing his vision into fearful stare?
Follow his lifted arm and lighted eye
And watch with them the wondrous mystery. —

* “He never drinks
But Timon’s silver treads upon his lip.” SHAK. *Tit. And.*

There cometh forth a hand — upon the stone,
Graving the symbols of a speech unknown ;
Fingers like mortal fingers — leaving there
The blank wall flashing characters of fear ; —
And still it glideth silently and slow,
And still beneath the spectral letters grow —
Now the scroll endeth — now the seal is set —
The hand is gone — the record tarries yet. —

As one who waits the warrant of his death,
With pale lips parted and with bridled breath —
They watch the sign and dare not turn to seek
Their fear reflected in their fellows' cheek —
But stand as statues where the life is none,
Half the jest uttered — half the laughter done —
Half the flask empty — half the flagon poured, —
Each where the phantom found him at the board
Struck into silence — as December's moon
Curbs the quick ripples into crystal swoon. —

With wand of ebony and sable stole
Chaldæa's wisest scan the spectral scroll —

Strong in the lessons of a lying art
Each comes to gaze, but gazes to depart —
And still for mystic sign and muttered spell
The graven letters guard their secret well —
Gleam they for warning — glare they to condemn —
God speaketh, — but he speaketh not for them. —

Oh ! ever, when the happy laugh is dumb,
All the joy gone, and all the anguish come —
When strong adversity and subtle pain
Wring the sad soul and rack the throbbing brain —
When friends once faithful, hearts once all our own
Leave us to weep, to bleed and die alone —
When fears and cares the lonely thought employ,
And clouds of sorrow hide the sun of joy —
When weary life, breathing reluctant breath
Hath no hope sweeter than the hope of death ; —
Then the best counsel and the last relief
To cheer the spirit or to cheat the grief,
The only calm, the only comfort heard
Comes in the music of a woman's word —
Like beacon-bell on some wild island-shore,
Silverly ringing in the tempest's roar,

Whose sound borne shipward through the midnight
gloom
Tells of the path, and turns her from her doom.

So in the silence of that awful hour
When baffled magic mourned its parted power —
When kings were pale and satraps shook for fear,
A woman speaketh — and the wisest hear ; —
She — the high daughter of a thousand thrones
Telling with trembling lip and timid tones
Of him the Captive, in the feast forgot,
Who readeth visions — him, whose wondrous lot
Sends him to lighten doubt and lessen gloom,
And gaze undazzled on the days to come —
Daniel the Hebrew, such his name and race,
Held by a monarch highest in his grace,
He may declare — Oh ! — bid them quickly send,
So may the mystery have happy end ! —

Calmly and silent as the fair full moon
Comes sailing upward in the sky of June —
Fearfully as the troubled clouds of night
Shrink from before the coming of its light —

So through the hall the Prophet passed along,
So from before him fell the festal throng.
By broken wassail-cup, and wine o'erthrown
Pressed he still onward for the monarch's throne.
His spirit failed him not — his quiet eye
Lost not its light for earthly majesty ;
His lip was steady and his accent clear,
"The king hath needed me, and I am here." —

"Art thou the Prophet? read me yonder scroll
"Whose undeciphered horror daunts my soul —
"There shall be guerdon for the grateful task,
"Fitted for me to give, for thee to ask —
"A chain to deck thee — and a robe to grace,
"Thine the third throne and thou the third in place."

He heard — and turned him where the lighted wall
Dimmed the red torches of the festival,
Gazed on the sign with steady gaze and set,
And he who quailed not at a kingly threat
Bent the true knee and bowed the silver hair,
For that he knew the King of kings was there —

Then nerved his soul the sentence to unfold,
While his tongue trembled at the tale it told —
And never tongue shall echo tale as strange
Till that change cometh which must never change.

“ Keep for thyself the guerdon and the gold —
“ What God hath graved, God's prophet must unfold ;
“ Could not thy father's crime, thy father's fate
“ Teach thee the terror thou hast learnt too late —
“ Hast thou not read the lesson of his life,
“ Who wars with God shall strive a losing strife ?
“ His was a kingdom mighty as thine own,
“ The sword his sceptre and the earth his throne —
“ The nations trembled when his awful eye
“ Gave to them leave to live or doom to die —
“ The Lord of Life — the Keeper of the grave,
“ His frown could wither and his smile could save —
“ Yet when his heart was hard, his spirit high
“ God drave him from his kingly majesty,
“ Far from the brotherhood of fellow men
“ To seek for dwelling in the desert den ;
“ Where the wild asses feed and oxen roam
“ He sought his pasture and he made his home,

“ And bitter-biting frost and dews of night
“ Schooled him in sorrow till he knew the right,
“ That God is ruler of the rulers still
“ And setteth up the sovereign that he will :
“ Oh ! hadst thou treasured in repentant breast
“ His pride and fall, his penitence and rest,
“ And bowed submissive to Jehovah’s will,
“ Then had thy sceptre been a sceptre still —
“ But thou hast mocked the majesty of heaven,
“ And shamed the vessels to its service given,
“ And thou hast fashioned idols of thine own
“ Idols of gold, of silver, and of stone ;
“ To them hast bowed the knee, and breathed the breath,
“ And they must help thee in the hour of death.
“ Woe for the sign unseen, the sin forgot,
“ God was among ye, and ye knew it not !
“ Hear what he sayeth now, ‘ Thy race is run,
“ The years are numbered and the days are done,
“ Thy soul hath mounted in the scale of fate,
“ The Lord hath weighed thee and thou lackest weight ;
“ Now in thy palace porch the spoilers stand,
“ To seize thy sceptre, to divide thy land.’ ”

He ended — and his passing foot was heard,
But none made answer, not a lip was stirred —
Mute the free tongue and bent the fearless brow, —
The mystic letters had their meaning now !
Soon came there other sound — the clash of steel,
The heavy ringing of the iron heel —
The curse in dying, and the cry for life,
The bloody voices of the battle strife. —

That night they slew him on his father's throne,
The deed unnoticed and the hand unknown ;
Crownless and sceptreless Belshazzar lay,
A robe of purple, round a form of clay.

THE THREE ROSES.



Three roses, wan as moonlight, and weighed down
Each with its loveliness as with a crown,
Drooped in a florist's window in a town.
The first a lover bought. It lay at rest,
Like flower on flower that night, on beauty's breast.
The second rose, as virginal and fair,
Shrank in the tangles of a harlot's hair.
The third a widow, with new grief made wild,
Shut in the icy palm of her dead child.

ALDRICH, *Flower and Thorn.*

THESE Roses (in the world we do not see)
Strove for the palm. Thus spake theauteous Three :

THE MAIDEN'S ROSE.

I AM the happiest flower. I lay
Dying, as suits sweet blossoms best ;
It was not pain to pass away
Upon her warm and fragrant breast.

Blossom on blossoms, so we slept ;
My odors richer with her breath,

My white leaves whitest where I crept
Closer, to die delightful death.

I heard her secrets, pure and soft ;
She kissed me, prayed for him, and laid
His gift where, since, his cheek full oft
Nestles ; he knows what words she said,

And how, when morn oped the bright eyes,
She locked me in a casket close ;
Nothing can take away my prize,
The kiss she gave her faded Rose.

The crown, fair sisters, I must hold ;
I died upon that heavenly bed ;
She buried me in silk and gold ;
I made them lovers, being dead.

THE WIDOW'S ROSE.

I AM the wisest Rose : there lay
A dew-drop on me when she shut
The little ice-cold palm, and put
My blossom there to fade away.

It was a tear for her and me
That she should grieve, and I should go
Clasped in a hand that did not know,
And set to eyes that could not see.

Torn from my garden green and bright,
As he too ; first-born of her spring,
Once flower-fair, now a lost, dead thing,
Hidden with me in graveyard night.

But, lo ! it was not thus at all !
I did not think that flowers could see
The wonder of the worlds to be
When the poor leaves of this life fall.

For while they wept, and sadly threw
The black earth on our coffin-lid,
A light came there where we were hid,
A wind breathed softer than I knew.

There shine no sunbeams so on earth,
There is no air blows in such wise
As this that swept from Paradise,
And turned grave-gloom to grace and mirth.

I saw him rise unspeakably ;
I saw how subtle Life receives
New gifts from Death. It was but leaves —
Dead leaves — we left there, I and he.

And clasped in that small hand I came —
A spirit-Rose as he was spirit —
The further marvels to inherit
Of Life, which is for all the same.

Crown me, white sisters ! When she bent —
That tender mother by his grave —
'Twas I who, with a rose-waft, gave
The thought that filled her with content.

THE HARLOT'S ROSE.

I was the blessed flower ! Give back
The crown, dear sisters ! for you lack
My joy — you ! that her bosom bore ;
You they entombed ! — my deeper lore.

'Twas sweet in lovely death to fade,
Rose-blossom on rose-bosom laid ;

'Twas rare in grasp of Death, to see
The flower of Life blow changelessly.

But I, most happy of all three,
Rejoice for what he did to me ;
Binding my bud on locks that rolled
Their wasted wealth in rippled gold.

For loveless love he set me there ;
With thankless thanks she found me fair ;
Laughed with sad eyes to hear him tell
The gold, with white and green, "went well."

We did our kind : she to bestow
God's grace in her rich beauty so
That good grew evil ; I to scent
Her steps and be Sin's ornament.

Yet 'twas my duty to seem sweet,
She had such bitter bread to eat !
She put me at her breast — I heard
Her heart-beats speaking, without word.

“ Each spring I plucked such long ago,”
She said — “ Ah, God ! if we could grow
Clean like spring-roses — white again —
Forgetting last year’s rain and stain ! ”

She said, “ Ah, God ! ah, mother ! — some
Are blooming so about my home,
The home-scent makes me dream — let be !
I have no lover that loves me.

“ What was it that we read in class ?
‘ And she supposing Him ’ — alas !
‘ The gardener.’ Fool ! as if God’s Son
Cares for the flowers that are done ! ”

Thereat our lips and leaves did kiss —
I was as sweet and soft in this
To her as any Rose could be —
“ God’s flowers forgive,” she sighed, — “ Doth He ? ”

And fondling me, as though she felt
Her mother’s kisses on her melt,
The tear-drops from her painted lids
Ran on the rouge. “ What eye forbids,”

She said, "to try if any hear?"
Mocking herself she sighed this prayer :
" Oh, Christ ! I am Thy wilted Rose,
Renew me ! Thou renewest those ! "

Then laughed, — but did not see, as I,
The angels gather at her cry,
Their fine plots weaving out of sight
To help this soul that strove aright.

She did not feel the great wings fold
Thenceforward o'er her locks of gold ;
Nor know thenceforward that the place
Was sentinelled by Shapes of grace.

But when again she bound her hair,
And set me in its tresses fair,
I did not " shrink," (as he has said :)
I was too proud ! for we were led

By holy hands through lane and street,
Past things to speak of is not meet ;
Till when the tender plot had place,
God's mercy met her face to face.

In all this earth there is not one
So desolate and so undone,
Who hath not rescue if they knew
A heart-cry goes the whole world through.

Of thousands cruel one was kind ;
We found the hand she could not find ;
The fragrance of me brought her cry —
We saved her : those Wise Ones and I,

I and her angels ! She hath rest !
Of all Rose-service mine was best.
Oh, sisters sweet ! no longer boast ;
Give me the crown ! My joy was most !

SHE AND HE.

“SHE is dead !” they said to him. “Come away ;
Kiss her ! and leave her ! — thy love is clay !”

They smoothed her tresses of dark brown hair ;
On her forehead of marble they laid it fair :

Over her eyes, which gazed too much,
They drew the lids with a gentle touch ;

With a tender touch they closed up well
The sweet thin lips that had secrets to tell ;

About her brows, and her dear, pale face
They tied her veil and her marriage-lace ;

And drew on her white feet her white silk shoes ; —
Which were the whiter no eye could choose !

And over her bosom they crossed her hands ;
“ Come away,” they said, — “ God understands ! ”

And then there was Silence ; — and nothing there
But the Silence — and scents of eglantere,

And jasmine, and roses, and rosemary ;
For they said, “ As a lady should lie, lies she ! ”

And they held their breath as they left the room,
With a shudder to glance at its stillness and gloom.

But he — who loved her too well to dread
The sweet, the stately, the beautiful dead, —

He lit his lamp, and took the key,
And turn'd it ! — Alone again — he and she !

He and she ; but she would not speak,
Though he kiss'd, in the old place, the quiet cheek ;

He and she ; yet she would not smile,
Though he call'd her the name that was fondest erewhile.

He and she ; and she did not move
To any one passionate whisper of love !

Then he said, " Cold lips ! and breast without breath !
Is there no voice ? — no language of death

" Dumb to the ear and still to the sense,
But to heart and to soul distinct, — intense ?

" See, now, — I listen with soul, not ear —
What was the secret of dying, Dear ?

" Was it the infinite wonder of all,
That you ever could let life's flower fall ?

" Or was it a greater marvel to feel
The perfect calm o'er the agony steal ?

" Was the miracle greatest to find how deep,
Beyond all dreams, sank downward that sleep ?

" Did life roll backward its record, Dear,
And show, as they say it does, past things clear ?

"And was it the innermost heart of the bliss
To find out so what a wisdom love is?

"Oh, perfect Dead ! oh, Dead most dear,
I hold the breath of my soul to hear ;

"I listen — as deep as to horrible hell,
As high as to heaven ! — and you do not tell !

"There must be pleasures in dying, Sweet,
To make you so placid from head to feet !

"I would tell *you*, Darling, if I were dead,
And 'twere your hot tears upon *my* brow shed.

"I would say, though the angel of death had laid
His sword on my lips to keep it unsaid.

"*You* should not ask, vainly, with streaming eyes,
Which in Death's touch was the chiefest surprise ;

"The very strangest and suddenest thing
Of all the surprises that dying must bring."

* * * *

Ah ! foolish world ! Oh ! most kind Dead !
Though he told me, who will believe it was said ?

Who will believe that he heard her say,
With the soft rich voice, in the dear old way : —

“ The utmost wonder is this, — I hear,
And see you, and love you, and kiss you, Dear ;

“ I can speak, now you listen with soul alone ;
If your soul could see, it would all be shewn

“ What a strange delicious amazement is Death,
To be without body and breathe without breath.

“ I should laugh for joy if you did not cry ;
Oh, listen ! Love lasts ! — Love never will die.

“ I am only your Angel who was your Bride ;
And I know, that though dead, I have never died.”

REST.



His mother was a prince's child,
His sire a crownèd king ;
There lacked not to his wishes wild
What the broad earth could bring :
Strong knees were supple at his word,
Swords glimmered at his will.
Brave fortune ! but it wearied him, —
His spirit thirsted still.

For him the glorious music rolled
Of singers silent long ;
The Roman and the Grecian told
Their wars of Right and Wrong ;
For him Philosophy unveiled
Athenian Plato's lore ;

Might these not serve to stead a life ?

Not these ! — he sighed for more.

* * * *

He loved, — the truest, newest lip

That ever lover pressed, —

The queenliest mouth of all the South

Long love for him confessed.

Round him his children's joyousness

Rang silverly and shrill ;

Thrice happy ! save that happiness

Lacked something, — something still.

* * * *

It came ! the studded sceptre lay

An unregarded thing ;

Velvets and gold did bravely hold

The body of the king.

Why ! strange that Love, and Lore, and Sway

Looked ever on before,

And those pale, quiet lips of clay

Asked nothing — nothing more !

ADELAIDE ANNE PROCTER.



“ILICET.”

IN Roman households, when their dear ones died,
Thrice by his name the living called the dead ;
And, silence only answering as they cried,
Illicet — “ go thou then ! ” — the mourners said.

Illicet ! let her part ! the Poet’s child,
Herself a mistress of the lyric song :
Illicet ! — to a world so sad and wild
To wish her back were far less love than wrong.

Illicet ! hard the word for those to say
Who know what gentleness is gone from earth ;
Harder for those whose dwelling, day by day,
Shone with her presence — echoed to her mirth :

Yet, if HE wills it — whom she soars to meet
— The Lord of this world's vineyard — shall *we* ask.
Who toil on, in the burden and the heat,
A later wage for her — a longer task ?

Illicet ! let her go ! though it were brave, —
In the hot vintage, where the strongest fail,
Weeding God's grapes from thistles — still to have
Her silver hymns o'er weariness prevail !

To hear her gentle, certain spirit of ruth
Share its great sureties with less happy brothers,
And — from eyes bright with Heav'n's light — teach the
truth
Of "*little children pleading for their mothers.*"

Illicet ! Otherwhere they need those strains,
Sounding so true for men — albeit low ;
A throne was vacant (though its steps were pains),
For a soul, tried, pure, perfect — let her go !

Sigh not "so young !" — "such promise !" — "ah ! a
flower
That longer life had sunned to fruit of gold."

Be still and see !— God's year, and day, and hour,
By lapse of mortal minutes is not told.

Who go are called — *ilicet* ! let her go !

Though a sweet harp is silent in the land,
A soft voice hushed — and, never more below,
Poet and poet's child join song and hand.

Illicet ! ilicet ! nos ibimus !—

To that divinest region of the skies,
Whence with clear sight she sees, knows, pities us,
We shall attain !— Vex not the dead with sighs.

AFTER DEATH IN ARABIA.



HE who died at Azan sends
This to comfort all his friends :

Faithful friends ! It lies, I know,
Pale and white and cold as snow ;
And ye say, " Abdallah 's dead ! "
Weeping at the feet and head,
I can see your falling tears,
I can hear your sighs and prayers ;
Yet I smile and whisper this, —
" *I* am not the thing you kiss ;
Cease your tears, and let it lie ;
It *was* mine, it is not I."

Sweet friends ! What the women lave
For its last bed of the grave,

Is a tent which I am quitting,
Is a garment no more fitting,
Is a cage from which, at last,
Like a hawk my soul hath passed.
Love the inmate, not the room, —
The wearer, not the garb, — the plume
Of the falcon, not the bars
Which kept him from these splendid stars.

Loving friends ! Be wise and dry
Straightway every weeping eye, —
What ye lift upon the bier
Is not worth a wistful tear.
'Tis an empty sea-shell, — one
Out of which the pearl is gone ;
The shell is broken, it lies there ;
The pearl, the all, the soul, is here.
'Tis an earthen jar, whose lid
Allah sealed, the while it hid
That treasure of his treasury,
A mind that loved him ; let it lie !
Let the shard be earth's once more,
Since the gold shines in his store !

Allah-glorious ! Allah good !
Now thy world is understood ;
Now the long, long wonder ends ;
Yet ye weep, my erring friends,
While the man whom ye call dead,
In unspoken bliss, instead,
Lives and loves you ; lost, 'tis true,
By such light as shines for you ;
But in light ye cannot see
Of unfulfilled felicity, —
In enlarging paradise,
Lives a life that never dies.

Farewell, friends ! Yet not farewell ;
Where I am, ye, too, shall dwell.
I am gone before your face,
A moment's time, a little space.
When ye come where I have stepped
Ye will wonder why ye wept ;
Ye will know, by wise love taught,
That here is all, and there is naught.
Weep awhile, if ye are fain, —
Sunshine still must follow rain ;

Only not at death, — for death,
Now I know, is that first breath
Which our souls draw when we enter
Life, which is of all life centre.

Be ye certain all seems love,
Viewed from Allah's throne above ;
Be ye stout of heart, and come
Bravely onward to your home !
La Allah illa Allah ! yea !
Thou love divine ! Thou love alway !

He that died at Azan gave
This to those who made his grave.

IN MEMORIAM.



AH ! not because our Soldier died before his field was
won ;

Ah ! not because life would not last till life's long task
were done,

Wreathe one less leaf, grieve with less grief, — of all our
hosts that led

Not last in work and worth approved, — Lord Raglan
lieth dead.

His nobleness he had of none, War's Master taught him
war,

And prouder praise that Master gave than meaner lips
can mar ;

Gone to his grave, his duty done ; if farther any seek,
He left his life to answer them, — a soldier's, — let it
speak !

'Twas his to sway a blunted sword, — to fight a fated field,
While idle tongues talked victory, to struggle not to yield ;
Light task for placeman's ready pen to plan a field for
fight,
Hard work and hot with steel and shot to win that field
aright.

Tears have been shed for the brave dead ; mourn him
who mourned for all !
Praise hath been given for strife well striven, praise him
who strove o'er all,
Nor count that conquest little, though no banner flaunt it
far,
That under him our English hearts beat Pain and Plague
and War.

And if he held those English hearts too good to pave the
path
To idle victories, shall we grudge what noble palm he
hath ?
Like ancient Chief he fought a-front, and mid his soldiers
seen,
His work was aye as stern as theirs ; oh ! make his grave
as green.

They know him well, — the Dead who died that Russian
wrong should cease,

Where Fortune doth not measure men, — their souls and
his have peace ;

Aye ! as well spent in sad sick tent as they in bloody
strife,

For English Homes our English Chief gave what he had,
— his life.

1853.

FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE.

If on this verse of mine
Those eyes shall ever shine,
Whereto sore-wounded men have looked for life,
Think not that for a rhyme,
Nor yet to fit the time,
I name thy name, — true victress in this strife !
But let it serve to say
That, when we kneel to pray,
Prayers rise for thee thine ear shall never know ;
And that thy gallant deed,
For God, and for our need,
Is in all hearts, as deep as love can go.

'Tis good that thy name springs
From two of Earth's fair things —

A stately city and a soft-voiced bird ;
 'Tis well that in all homes,
 When thy sweet story comes,
And brave eyes fill — that pleasant sounds be heard.
 Oh voice ! in night of fear,
 As night's bird, soft to hear,
Oh great heart ! raised like city on a hill ;
 Oh watcher ! worn and pale,
 Good Florence Nightingale,
Thanks, loving thanks, for thy large work and will !
 England is glad of thee —
 Christ, for thy charity,
Take thee to joy when hand and heart are still !

1853.

DEDICATION OF A POEM FROM THE SANSKRIT.



SWEET, on the daisies of your English grave
I lay this little wreath of Indian flowers,
Fragrant for me because the scent they have
Breathes of the memory of our wedded hours ;

For others scentless ; and for you, in heaven,
Too pale and faded, dear dead wife ! to wear,
Save that they mean — what makes all fault forgiven —
That he who brings them lays his heart, too, there.

**TRANSLATIONS FROM THE GREEK
POETS.**

TRANSLATIONS FROM THE GREEK
POETS.



FROM THE ODYSSEY.

THEREUPON, stripping his tatters away, many-counselled
Ulysses
Strode to the threshold, and stood there, upholding his
bow, and his quiver
Brim-full of shafts ; on the ground poured he forth the
light-wingèd arrows
All in a pile at his feet, then turned to the suitors and
spake this :
“Yonder match has been played ; ye have seen my skill
at the target :
Now I will shoot a shot that no man, I fancy, will
better,
Into a different mark — if I may — and Apollo shall aid
me.”

Straight at Antinous then a keen-bladed arrow he
levelled.

Grasping a golden cup stood the chief—a cup with two
handles ;

Deep in the draught he was, no thought in his mind of
destruction !

How should a lord at the feast, in the midst of the
banqueters, drinking,

Dream that, one against many—nay, though the strongest
of mortals,

Thus could do him to death, and send him to sudden
perdition ?

Even as he quaffed, in the jowl the shaft of Odusseus
transfixed him :

Right thro' the soft o' the neck the steel point travelled ;
his body

Tottered, bent, and fell ; from his fingers the two-handled
goblet

Clattered ; a gush of blood burst thick and hot from his
nostrils !

Sprawling and writhing, the feet of him kicked the board
and o'erset it,

Spilling the viands and wine, overturning the roast meat
and boiled meat,

Mixing the cates and fruit with his blood. The suitors,
affrighted,
Sprang from the benches on this side and that side, and
ran to the dead man,
Glaring for shield or for spear along the walls of the palace :
Not one spear there was, nor sword, nor target to help
them ;
Then they turned with furious words on Odusseus, and
cursed him.
“Stranger, thou shootest too well ; but this is the last of
thy shooting !
Death shall have thee for this ! Thou hast killed with thy
villanous arrow
One of the Ithaca princes, as noble and lordly as any,
Great in birth and deed : for this thing the vultures shall
pick thee.”

Each of them waited, expecting the man would surely
crave pardon,
Saying, “the arrow slipped,” that “the deed was wrought
maladventure.”
Fools, who did not feel Death’s portals yawning to take
them !

Then with terrible eyes broke forth the wrathful Odus-
seus :

“Dogs ! ye did not think I should ever live to come
hither,

Back from the city of Troy ; and so ye harried my palace,
Ravished my handmaids, and, I being breathing, ye dared
to beset her —

Her ! my wife, Penelope — her ! with your impudent
suings,

Nothing regarding the gods, who reign in infinite heaven,
Neither believing that any man lived who would shrewdly
requite you.

Now for all of you — all ! — the hour is arrived of your
judgment.”

Sickly their visages waxed with fear as his accents
resounded ;

Hither and thither they rolled their eyes to find any
refuge ;

Only Eurymachus gathered his breath, and answered in
this way :

“If, of a truth, thou art he, the Odusseus of Ithaca,
living,

Just are thy words, and rightful thy wrath at the deeds of
the princes,

Done without shame in thy halls, and done in thy fields,
without number.

Yet this dead man here was the head and front of the
sinning :

He, Antinous, set us on to the worst of our doings ;
Caring not half so much for thy beauteous queen, nor to
win her,

As that this thing might be, the which dread Zeus has
forbidden,

Namely, to reign alone over all thine Ithacan king-
dom,

King and Lord — having slain thy son and gotten his
birthright.

Now he is dead for his scheme ; but do thou have mercy
and spare us —

Liegemen of thine and submissive — then we, going home
to our houses,

Thence will bring for whatever was eaten or drunk in thy
palace

Each of us twenty-fold back to thee here, a great restitu-
tion.

Brass and gold we will fetch, and whatsoever may please thee,
Only be merciful now, and let not thine anger o'erwhelm us."

Him, with a look of fire, the mighty Odusseus thus
answered : —

“Not if ye brought me, Eurymachus, all that ye have on the islands.

All that is yours to-day, and all ye may ever own after,
Would I for this hold back my hand from its office of
death here.

Deed for deed I will have my price in the blood of your
bodies.

Now, then, choose ye your way to die, and face me and fight me ;

Else turn about and fly from the fates that I send from
my bowstring —

If, indeed, ye can fly—for I think my shafts will go faster."

Hearing his words, their knees grew loose and their hearts were like water ;

Yet once more Eurymachus spake — this time to the
sutors :

“ Friends, the man is in earnest ; he will not be stayed
from his purpose,

But while an arrow is left he will shoot from his terrible
bow there

Shot upon shot from the threshold, till each of us fall by
his fellow,

Slain in a pile. Recall, then, our manhood ! Stand not
to be butchered !

Draw what swords we have, and hold the board up before
us,

So, with its fence, let us rush in close order upon him !
If one man

Thrust his way past the door, he may come to the town
and call succor,

Then peradventure this shooter will pull his bow for the
last time.”

So, as he spoke, from its scabbard Eurymachus drew
forth his falchion,

Bronze in the blade, two-edged, and rushed with a yell to
the portal,

Waving it high ; but right as he came the watchful
Odusseus

Let go a whistling shaft which took him under the breast-
bone,

Plunging barb-deep in the liver. Down out of his grasp
fell the falchion,

Clattering he rolled in the wreck of the festival, screaming
and twisting :

Platters and food flew about, and cups whirled hither and
thither,

While the wretch hit this way and that his head on the
pavement,

Mad with the anguish, and struck with his feet the boards
and the benches,

Beating a horrid tune, till death's fog clouded his eye-
balls.

Next Amphinomus faced his fate, and ran at Odus-
seus

Headlong, drawing his keen-edged blade, and desperately
hoping

If he might break his way ; but him Telemachus dealt
with,

Striking him quick as he passed with the 'bronze-barbed
spear in the shoulders —

Right through the back it drove, and out at the ribs made
its passage.

Down with a crash he fell, full-front on the stones of the
pavement :

Nay, and Telemachus left him so, with the spear in his
shoulders,

Dreading lest one of the suitors, the while he tugged at
the weapon,

Either with sword or club should find him helpless, and
slay him ;

Therefore back to his father he came, and spoke in his
ear this :

“ Father, 'twere good I fetched thee shield and spears
and a helmet ;

Armed thou shouldst be for the rest of this matter, and I,
having donned it,

Armor will bring for the swineherd and cowherd, if thou
canst abide here.”

FROM HOMER.

THE heavenly Muses Three
 A branch of laurel gave, which they had plucked,
 To be my sceptre ; and they breathed a song.
 In music on my soul, and bade me set
 Things past and things to be to that high strain ;
 Also they bade me sing the race of gods,
 Themselves, at first and last, ever remembering.

FROM HESIOD.

ONCE a hawk said this to a nightingale ; —
 The robber had the singer in his claws,
 High up among the clouds, and Philomel,
 Trembling, and nipped in those sharp crooked talons,
 Bewailed ; whereat the hawk savagely screamed :
 “ Why pipe, my friend ? I am too strong to heed ;
 I take you where I will, for all your singing ;
 To eat you if I like, or let you go ;
 And he 's a fool that fights against his fate.
 He loses, and gets shame, beside his tears.”

FROM HESIOD.

THEN Zeus let loose his wrath ! his awful heart,
 Brimfull of anger, gave his will its way !

From Heaven's vault and high Olympus' crags
 Impetuous he bade start the leashed-up fires :
 Lightning and thunder and the thunderbolts
 Flew from his mighty hand — flame with the crash,
 And bolts with both — fire, noise, and bolts all mixed !
 Groaned fruitful Mother Earth, wrapped in the war ;
 All her vast forests crackled, lightning-scorched ;
 The parched fields heaved and split ; the ocean-floods
 Bubbled, with all the streams, and lurid smoke
 Curled round the Titans fighting — whence the glare
 Blazed up across and through the infinite air ;
 So that those warrior-ranks, albeit like gods,
 Were blinded with the dazzle of the flash,
 And deaf with leaping peals.

FROM HESIOD.

“THE WOMAN BORN OF A BEE.”

FROM youth to age she grows dear to her spouse ;
 Fills with fair girls and sturdy boys his house ;
 Among all women womanliest seems,
 And heavenly grace about her mild brow gleams.

A gentle wife, a noble friend she walks,
 Nor ever with the gossipmongers talks ;
 Such women sometimes Zeus to mortals gives,
 The glory and the solace of their lives.

FROM SIMONIDES OF AMORGOS,

SPLENDOR-THRONED Queen ! immortal Aphrodite !
 Daughter of Jove — Enchantress ! I implore thee
 Vex not my soul with agonies and anguish ;

Slay me not, Goddess !

Come in thy pity — come, if I have prayed thee ;
 Come at the cry of my sorrow ; in the old times
 Oft thou hast heard and left thy father's heaven,

Left the gold houses,

Yoking thy chariot. Swiftly did the doves fly,
 Swiftly they brought thee, waving plumes of wonder —
 Waving their pale plumes all across the æther,

All down the azure !

Very soon they lighted. Then didst thou, Divine one,
 Laugh a bright laugh from lips and eyes eternal,
 Ask me, "What ailed me — wherefore out of heaven

"Thus I had called thee ?

"What it was made me madden in my heart so?"

Question me, smiling — say to me, "My Sappho,

"Who is it wrongs thee? tell me who refuses

"Thee, vainly sighing."

"Be it who it may be, he that flies shall follow ;

"He that rejects gifts, he shall bring thee many ;

"He that hates now shall love thee dearly, madly —

"Ay, though thou wouldst not."

So once again come, Mistress ; and, releasing

Me from my sadness, give me what I sue for,

Grant me my prayer, and be as heretofore now

Friend and protectress !

FROM SAPPHO.

HESPERUS brings all things back

Which the day-light made us lack,

Brings the sheep and goats to rest,

Brings the baby to the breast.

FROM SAPPHO.

LOVE once among the roses

Perceived a bee reposing,

And wondered what the beast was,

And touched it, so it stung him.

Sorely his finger smarted,
 And bitterly he greeted,
 And wrung his hands together ;
 And half he ran, half fluttered
 Unto Cythera's bosom,
 Unto his fair, sweet mother.
 Loud sobbed he, " Ai ! ai ! mother !
 Olola ! I am murdered !
 Olola ! it has killed me !
 A small brown snake with winglets,
 That men the bumble-bee call,
 Has bit me." But Cythera
 Said, laughing, " Ah, my baby,
 If bees' stings hurt so sorely,
 Bethink thee what the smart is
 Of those, Love, that thou piercest."

FROM ANACREON.

DAUGHTER of Justice, wingèd Nemesis ;
 Thou of the awful eyes,
 Whose silent sentence judgeth mortal life !
 Thou with thy curb of steel,
 Which proudest jaws must feel,

Stayest the snort and champ of human strife ;
 And, hating miserable pride of men,
 Dost tame fierce hearts, and turn them meek agen.
 Under thy wheel, unresting, trackless, all
 Our joys and griefs befall ;
 In thy full sight our secret things go on ;
 Step after step thy wrath
 Follows the caitiff's path,
 And at his triumph breaks his vile neck-bone.
 To all alike thou metest out their due,
 Cubit for cubit, inch for inch — stern — true.

FROM MESOMEDES.

LIFE without golden love — what bliss is this ?
 Oh, let me die when love is dead with me !
 The stolen words, the honeyed gifts, the kiss,
 These are the blossoms of youth's glorious tree.

FROM MIMNERMUS.

TWO IDYLS FROM THEOCRITUS.

THUS begins the first idyl of Theocritus ; the pine music and the bubble of the fountain whisper and tinkle through its lines : —

THYRSIS.

SOFTLY the sway of the pine-branches murmurs a melody,
Shepherd !

Down by the rim of the fountain, and softly dost thou, on
the Pan-pipes,

Pipe to the pines : next to Pan thou bearest the bell for
rare music.

Say that he wins a great-horn'd goat, then thine is a she-
goat ;

Say that the she-goat is his, but thine is the kid, then ;
and tender

Savors the meat of a kid — till she comes to the bearing
and milking.

GOATHERD.

Sweeter I call thy strain than the tinkle of water that
trickles,

Tinkling, and trickling, and rippling adown the green
shelves of the mountain.

If we must grant the high Muses their prize from the pick
of the wethers,

Certainly thine is a ewe : or if a ewe pleases their fancy,
Then at the least a lamb comes to thee — to drive to thy
sheep-folds.

THYRSIS.

Sit thee adown, good friend — sit down, and pipe to us,
Shepherd !

Here where the side of the hill slopes fair, and the myrtles
are thickest,

Blow the fine music out : the yearlings can pasture
around us !

GOATHERD.

Nay ! 'twere a sin, 'twere a sin — the sun 's at his highest,
my Thyrsis ;

Pan would be anger'd to hear me — just now, he breaks
off from hunting,

Stretches his hairy limbs in the shade, and puffs his great
nostrils,

Panting, and surly for lack of breath, and longing for
slumber.

You now, Thyrsis, might sing ! you know the ballad of
Daphnis :

None of our woodside singers have half such a trick at
the measure.

Couch we here under these elms, on the grass at the foot
of the stone-god,

Facing the fountain, and looking right on to the moun-
tains and meadows,

Over the tops of the oaks ; and if you sing only so deftly
As you did once on the day when Chromis the African
dared you,

Look ! I'll give you yon she-goat ; the dam of a couplet
of weanlings ;

Udder she carries for both, and then to fill two of thy
milk-bowls.

Her, and a cup cut in beech, two-handled and polished
with beeswax,

Clean and new, with the smell of the chisel and fresh
wood about it ;

All round its rim, on the top, there creeps a string of
ground ivy,

Twisted and tangled with woodbine, while here and there,
in the circle,

Tendrils curl and clasp — with bunches of berries among
them.

Outside a damsel is carved — so fair the gods might have
wrought her !

Neat and trim, with her mantle and net — and — this
hand and that hand —

Two youths — both long-hair'd — both comely — contend
for her favors

Angrily — never a jot cares my pretty jade for their
anger !

Sometimes she flings a smile to one, and frowns to his
fellow,

Sometimes she softens to t'other — and there they stand
in the beechwood,

Laugh'd at, but mad with love — half-teased, half-pleased
at the wanton.

Next a fisherman comes, cut out on a rock, and its
ledges

Jut up rough and stark ; — the old boy, done to a marvel,
Staggers and sweats at his work — just like a fisherman
hauling ;

Looking upon it you'd swear the work was alive, and no
picture,

So do the veins knot up and swell in his neck and his
shoulders,

For, though he's wrinkled and grey, there's stuff left yet
in the ancient.

Next to this old sea-dog you see a vine — all its
branches

Heavy with globing grapes — a little lad sits by a thicket,
Guarding the grapes, but close at hand two foxes come
creeping,

One in the vineyard munches the clusters — one's after
the wallet :

Gods ! you can see his scheme — he'll keep his eye on
the youngster,

Till that he finds a chance, and leaves him dinnerless.
Blind one !

Why do you sit there weaving with grasses a cage for your
crickets,

Plaiting the grasses, and wholly forgetting your wallet and
dinner,

Wholly forgetting your grapes — wrapped up in those
grasshopper-engines ?

All the work in this cup 's filled in with leaves of acanthus ;

'Tis an Æolic thing — and sooth, of a wonderful fancy,
Sirs ! it cost me to buy of the Calydon sailor, a big cheese
Made of snow-white curds, and a she-goat into the bargain ;

Yet it has touch'd no lip, but lies this while in my cottage.
See now ! I mean it for you ! 'tis yours, if you sing us that
ditty

Half so well as you sang it before to the Himera shepherds.

No thanks ! do but sing ! — there 's no more sunshine nor singing

Under the grass — in the realm of the dead — where all is forgotten !

SUCH is the pastoral vein of the great poet of Trinacria ; the second idyll is a good specimen of his picturesque and passionate manner, and of the exquisite melody of his line. It is a love piece, tender and fierce alternately, as were the dark eyes of the island girls. The English version given below of this remarkable poem is a paraphrase in part, rather than an exact translation ; but there

are passages in the "Pharmakeutria" which go almost beyond the grace of English. In this idyll Simœtha, a Syracusan girl, deserted by her lover Delphis, performs, to bring him back to her, the "Incantation of the Bird;" wherein the bird called the wryneck was bound to a wheel, and whirled round, while prayers were made to the Moon and the deities of the Night. The sweet Greek runs thus:—

THESTYLIS! where are the laurel-leaves? Quick, girl!

bring me the love-spells!

Fasten the scarlet thread in and out round the brim of
the beaker!

Quick! for I mean to charm my lover, my false-hearted
lover.

Twelve long days are passed, and he never has once come
to see me,

Knows not if I be living or dead—never sends me a
message,

No! not even a word at my door! Has he gone to some
new love,

Light as the wings of Eros, and fleeting as Queen Aphro-
dite?

Down to the town I will hasten to-morrow, and see him,
and ask him

Face to face, why he treats me so coldly : but Thestylis !
thou now

Help me to try him with charms, and oh Moon ! glitter
thy brightest !

Shine, pale Moon ! for thee I invoke, and thy sister and
shadow

Hecate — the under-world Moon, whom even the little
dogs howl at

When she goes forth o'er the graves, and all her footmarks
are bloody :

Make my magic to-night as strong as ever was Circe's,
Potent as white Perimede's, and mighty as Colchian
Medea's !

Little bird ! whirl and scream, and whirl, and bring me
my lover !

Turn wheel, turn ! and burn, cake, burn ! Ah ! Thestylis,
sprinkle !

What are you doing to tremble so ? sprinkle the salt on
the brazier !

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Where are your wits gone, girl? or is it that you too must
vex me?

Sprinkle the salt, and say, "Flesh and blood of Delphis I
scatter!"

Little bird! scream, and whirl, and scream, and bring me
my lover!

Delphis grieves me — in my turn
I will grieve him. Laurel, burn!
As thy bright leaves curl and crack,
Smoke and blaze and vanish black,
Leaving not a leaf to see:
May his heart love-scorchèd be!

Little bird! whirl, and scream, little bird! and bring me
my lover!

As I melt this waxen ball
May the great gods hear me call,
And Delphis melt with love for me!
And as this wheel turns rapidly
So may Queen Venus speed the charms
And bring him quickly to my arms!

Little bird, whirl, whirl, whirl! scream! scream! and
bring me my lover!

Now I scatter on the flame
Bran. Oh! Artemis! thy name
Moves the Judge of Hell to fear,
Rhadamanth himself! Then hear!
Hear! oh, hear me! Thestylis,
Did the dogs bark? Yes, it is!
'Tis the goddess in the street!
Beat the cymbals! quick, girl! beat!

Little bird, scream — scream louder! and bring me my
false-hearted lover!

Look! the restless sea is sleeping,
Milk-white ripples curling, creeping!
Listen! all the winds are quiet,
Folded up from rage and riot!
Only in my heart the pain
Wakes, and will not sleep again!
Bitter pain the sport to be
Of him who hath unmaidened me.

Little bird, whirl — whirl fast ! scream sharp — scream !
call me my lover !

Thrice libations due I pay,
Thrice, great goddess ! this I say,
Whom he loves now I know not,
But let her come to be forgot !
Clean forgot from head to feet
As Ariadne was of Crete.

Scream, little bird ! more — more ! and whirl, and fetch
me my lover !

In Arcady there grows a flower,
Stings the herds with subtle power,
Drives them mad on vale and height :
Would I had that flower to-night !
Delphis should come quick to me,
Come, whate'er his company !

Scream for me still, little bird ! scream once, and call me
my lover !

Delphis left this gift with me :
 In the fire I fling it. See !
 Burn it red and burn it black,
 Angry hissing flames ! Alack !
 It leaps away — he 'll not return !
 It only burneth as I burn,
 And now 'tis ashes, pale and grey,
 As pale as I grow day by day.

Scream ere you die, little bird ! one cry to call me my
 lover !

Lizards green and gold I take
 (Mighty magic this will make),
 Slit them down from chin to tail,
 Squeeze their cold blood, cold and pale.
 Thestylis, take this to-morrow
 (It can work him bliss or sorrow),
 Lay it on his threshold stone,
 Spit to the left, and say alone,
 "She whose heart you tread on here
 Charms you, Delphis ! Love to fear !"

Dead are you, poor little fool? and you could not bring
me my lover !

Ah, me ! what shall I do? Alone, alone ! —
I 'll think the story over of my love,
How it began — what made the sweet pain come.
It was the day Anaxo was to walk
Bearing the basket for great Artemis,
With striped and spotted beasts in the procession.
Oh ! — and you recollect — a lioness !

Lady Moon ! listen and pity ! and help me, bringing my
lover !

And my old Thracian nurse, Theucharila
Came — you remember — teasing, tempting me
To go and see them pass, and so I went.
O fool ! I went wearing the yellow bodice,
And Clearista's purple train from Tyre.

Lady Moon ! listen and pity, and say where tarries my
lover !

And when we came hard by where Lycon lives
 Upon the paved way, there I saw him first,
 Delphis, with Eudamippus — oh, you know !
 His hair danced back from off his brow, like sprays
 Of bright amaracus, when the west wind blows,
 And all his neck, flushed with the heat of the games,
 Shone as thou shinest, Moon ! but rosier pearl !

Lady Moon ! Lady Moon, listen, and pity, and bring me
 my lover !

I saw him — looked ! loved ! oh, my foolish eyes !
 Oh me ! the coward color of my cheeks !
 Oh, heart that straight went mad ! I did not mark
 Those tame beasts any more ; how I came home
 I cannot call to mind ; you know I lay
 Ten days and nights indoors, and never rose.

Lady Moon ! sweet pale Moon ! have mercy, and bring
 me this lover !

I grew as pale — as white as thapsus-wood !
 Say if I braided up my hair, or sang !

Say if I grew not to a ghost, with thinking !
 When was the day you sought not who he was,
 Where was the crone we did not plague for charms
 To bring him? All in vain ; he never came !

Oh, Moon ! hide not thy face. Oh, white Moon ! listen
 and pity !

So I grew sick with waiting, and I said,
 “ Ah, Thestylis, help ! — heal me, or I die !
 “ This Greek boy hath bewitched me. Go, my friend !
 “ Watch at the gateway of the wrestling-school.
 “ He cometh there, I think, to play or sit,

Silver-faced Queen of the Stars, thou know'st we are not
 as immortals !

“ And when he is alone, whisper full soft
 “ And say, ‘ Simœtha bids thee come,’ and then
 “ If he will, bring him ! ” So you went and came
 Bringing my love to me. But when I heard
 His sandals on the step, and saw his face —

Lady Moon ! hear this now, and pity, and shine while I
tell you !

And saw his face, I turned as cold as snow,
And tears — I wot not why — sprang to my lids,
And how to speak I knew not ; not so much
As little children startled in the night,
That sob, and know it is all well — but sob,
And will not stint even for their mother's voice.
I was as dumb as dead things, Thestylis.

Queen of the planets and stars ! forgive, and listen, and
pity !

For he with a bright gladness — not too bold —
Entered ; and looked hard once, and then looked down,
And sat against my feet ; and sitting, said,
“ Only so little, sweet Simœtha ! thou
“ Hast been the first to speak — as I was first
“ Against Philinus in the race to-day, —

White-sandalled Mistress of Night ! have patience, and
hear me and help me.

"I should have come, I swear it by my head !
 "To-morrow at the dusk. I meant to bring
 "Some choice rose-apples in my breast. Mayhap
 "You love them ; and a crown of poplar leaves
 "Twisted with myrtle-buds and tied with red ;

Lady Moon, where is he now ? so soft, so gentle, so fickle !

"And if you had seemed kind I should have spoke.
 "I was not hopeless, for I won the prize
 "At running, and the maidens call me fair.
 "The one prize I have longed for since the feast
 "Was once to touch the goal of those dear lips ;
 "Then I could rest — not else ! But had you frowned,
 "And bade me go, and barred your door on me,
 "Oh, Sweet ! I think I should have come with lamps
 "And axes, and have stolen you like gold !

Lady Moon, where is he now ? so gentle, so earnest, so winning !

"How shall I," he went on, "thank the gods first,
 "And next you — you ! the queen and life of me !

“My kindest love — who badst me hither come

“When I did burn for leave — yea ! for I think

“Hephæstus hath no flame like Eros lights !”

Lady Moon, look out of heaven, and find him, and bring
him for pity.

So he spake, low and fair, and I, alas !

What could I do, but reach my hand to him,

And let him take it, and take me, and have

The kiss he sued for, and another such ?

My cheeks were white no more, nor my heart sad,

Nor any trouble left ; but we sat close,

And the soft talk bubbled from lip to lip

Like fountains in the roses. All that time,

And many a time we sat so : never once

He failed to keep his word, and never once

Left, save with lingering foot. But one ill day

He did not come, and then it was I heard

Stories, that vexed me, of another love :

Melixa's mother, and the harp-player

Told me — and both are friends — he'd come no more,

And that his house was loud with pipes and songs,

And gay with crowns, not woven now for me.
 Oh, Thestylis ! twelve days ago this was,
 And never have I seen him since that day,
 And never shall, unless my magic works :
 Therefore blow up the flame, and whirl the wheel !

Lady Moon ! speed this spell ; and fetch me my false-
 hearted lover.

Speed this spell ! if it brings you,
 Delphis, love shall live anew :
 If in vain I watch and wait,
 Delphis, love will turn to hate !
 Subtle drugs I treasure here,
 Drugs of awful force and fear :
 A Syrian witch culled these for me
 In lonely caverns by the sea.
 Delphis, if I brew this drink
 It will send you, as I think,
 Down to Hades' gate, to seek
 A sweeter lip, a fairer cheek.
 Oh, Moon ! spare me this at last !
 Oh, Moon ! speed it — if I must.

And now farewell ! for one day more
 I wait, and love him as before !
 Farewell, pale Moon, and planets bright,
 Watchers with me this silent night !

FROM THEOCRITUS.

LAMENT OF ADONIS.

Woe is me for Adonis ! gone dead is the comely Adonis !
 Dead is the god-like Adonis ! the young Loves wail for
 him, ai ! ai !
 Sleep no more, wrapped in thy mantles of Tyrian, lady of
 Cyprus !
 Rise, don thy raiment of azure, pale mourner, and beat on
 thy bosom !
 Tell out thy sorrow to all — he is dead, thy darling
 Adonis.

Ai ! ai ! wail for Adonis ! — the young Loves wail for
 him, ai ! ai !
 Hurt on the hill lies Adonis the beautiful ; torn with the
 boar's tusk,

Torn on the ivory thigh with the ivory tusk, his low
gasping

Anguishes Cypris' soul : the dark blood trickles in rivers
Down from his snowy side — his eyes are dreamily dim-
ming

Under their lids ; and the rose leaves his lip, and the
kisses upon it

Fade, and wax fainter, and faintest, and die, before
Cypris can snatch them ;

Dear to the Goddess his kiss, though it be not the kiss of
the living ;

Dear — but Adonis wists nought of the mouth that kissed
him a-dying.

Ai ! ai ! wail for Adonis ! — ai ! ai ! say the Loves for
Adonis.

Cruel ! ah, cruel the wound on the thigh of the hunter
Adonis,

Yet in her innermost heart a deeper wears Queen Cy-
theræa.

Round the fair dead boy his hounds pace, dismally howl-
ing ;

Round him the hill-spirits weep ; but chiefest of all
Aphrodite,

Letting her bright hair loose, goes wild through the depths
of the forest

Passionate, panting, unkempt ; with feet unsandalled,
whose beauty

Thorn-bushes tear as she passes, and drip with the blood
of the Goddess.

Bitterly bitterly wailing, down all the long hollows she
hurries,

Calling him Husband and Love — her Boy — her Syrian
Hunter.

Meantime dead in his gore lieth he — from groin unto
shoulder

Bloody ; from breast to thigh ; the fair young flank of
Adonis,

Heretofore white as the snow, dull now, and dabbled with
purple.

Ai ! ai ! woe for Adonis ! the Loves say, " woe for
Adonis ! "

That which hath killed her sweet lover hath killed a grace
which was god-like !

Perfect the grace seemed of Cypris so long as Adonis
was living ;

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Gone is her beauty now — ai ! ai ! gone dead with
Adonis :

All the hills echo it — all the oaks whisper it, “ Ah, for
Adonis ! ”

Even the river-waves ripple the sorrows of sad Aphrodite,
Even the springs on the hills drop tears for the hunter
Adonis ;

Yea, and the rose-leaves are redder for grief ; for the grief
Cytheræa
Tells in the hollow dells, and utters to townland and
woodland.

Ai ! ai ! Lady of Cyprus, “ Lo ! dead is my darling
Adonis ! ”

Echo answers thee back, “ Oh ! dead is thy darling
Adonis.”

Who, good sooth, but would say, Ai ! ai ! for her passion-
ate story ?

When that she saw and knew the wound of Adonis — the
death-wound —

Saw the blood come red from the gash, and the white
thigh a-waning,

Wide outraught she her arms, and cried, “ Ah ! stay, my
Adonis !

Stay for me, ill-starred love ! — stay ! stay ! till I take thee
the last time,

Hold thee and fold thee, and lips meet lips, and mingle
together.

Rouse thee — a little, Adonis ! kiss back for the last time,
beloved !

Kiss me — kiss me — only so long as the life of a kiss is !
So I may suck from thy soul to my mouth, to my inner-
most heart-beat,

All the breath of thy life, and take the last of its love-spell
Unto the uttermost end — one kiss ! I will tenderly
keep it

As I did thee, my Adonis, sith thou dost leave me,
Adonis !

Far thou dost go and for long — thou goest to the region
of shadows,

Unto a hateful and pitiless Power, and I, the unhappy,
Live ! and alack ! am a goddess, and cannot die and go
after ;

Take thou my spouse, dark Queen, have here my hus-
band, as thou art

Stronger by far than I, and to thee goeth all that is
goodly.

. 240 TRANSLATIONS FROM THE GREEK POETS.

Utterly hapless my fate, and utterly hopeless my grief is,
Weeping my love who is dead, and hating the Fate that
hath slain him.

Fled is my joy, like a dream ; thou art dead, thrice lovely
and longed for !

Queen Cytheræa is widowed — the Loves in my bowers
are idle —

Gone my charmed girdle with thee ; why, rash one,
went'st thou a-hunting ?

Mad wert thou, being so fair, to match thee with beasts
of the forest."

So grieved the Lady of Cyprus — the young Loves wept
for her sorrow,

Saying "Ai ! ai ! Cytheræa ! gone dead is her darling
Adonis."

Drop by drop as the hunter bleeds, the tears of the God-
dess

Fall and blend with the blood, and both on the ground
become flowers ;

Rose-blossoms grow from the blood, and wind-lilies out of
the tear-drops.

Ai ! ai ! comely Adonis — gone dead is the god-like
Adonis ;

Wander no longer bewailing in glade and in thicket, sad
lady !

Fair is his bed of leaves, and fragrant the couch where
thy dead lies,

Dead, but as lovely as life — yea, dead — but as lovely as
sleep is ;

Lap him in mantles of silk — such robes as he once took
delight in

When by thy side he passed in caresses the season of
starbeams,

Lulled on a couch of gold — though dead, the raiments
become him ;

Heap on him garlands and blossoms and buds, entomb
them together ;

When that Adonis died, the flowers died too, and were
withered !

Rain on him perfumes and odors, shed myrtle and spices
upon him ;

Let all delightful things die and go with him, for dead is
the dearest.

So lies he lovely, in death-shroud of purple, the fair young
Adonis ;

Round about his couch the Loves go piteously wailing,

Tearing their hair for Adonis ; and one has charge of his
arrows,

One of his polished bow, and one of his well-feathered
quiver ;

One unclasps his sandal, and one in a water-pot golden
Brings bright water to lave his limbs, and one at the bier-
head

Fans with her pinions the forehead and eyes of the sleep-
ing Adonis.

Ah ! but for Cypris herself the young Loves sorrow the
sorest ;

Quenched are the marriage-lamps in the halls of the God
Hymenæus,

Scattered his marriage crowns ; no more he sings, “ Hy-
men, oh ! Hymen,”

“ Hymen ! ” no more is the song he goes singing, but
evermore ai ! ai !

“ Ah, for Adonis,” he cries, and “ Ah ! ” say the Graces,
“ Adonis ! ”

More than the marriage-god even, they weep for the
Syrian huntsman,

One to the other still saying, “ Dead — dead is the lovely
Adonis ! ”

All the nine Muses bewail — but he hears no more music
and singing,
Nay, not if that he would ; Fate holds him fast and for
ever.

Cease, Cytheræa, thy sobs ; a little while rest from thine
anguish,
Soon must thy tears flow again, and again comes the
season of sorrow.

FROM BION.

PRAYER TO THE MUSES.

GLORY and praise to those sweet lamps of earth,
The nine fair Daughters of Almighty Jove,
Who all the passage dark to death from birth
Lead wandering souls with their bright beams of love.

Through cares of mortal life, through pain and woe,
The tender solace of their counsel saves ;
The healing secrets of their songs forego
Despair ; and when we tremble at the waves

On life's wild sea of murk incertitude,
 Their gentle touch upon the helm is pressed,
 Their hand points out the beacon-star of good,
 Where we shall make our harbor, and have rest —

The planet of our home wherefrom we fell,
 Allured by this poor show of lower things,
 Tempted among earth's dull deceits to dwell :
 But oh ! great Sisters, hear his prayer who sings,

And calm the restless flutter of his breast,
 And fill him with the thirst for wisdom's stream ;
 Nor ever suffer earthly sights unblest
 To turn his vision from the eternal beam.

Ever and ever higher, from the throng
 Lawless and witless, lead his feet aright
 Life's perils and perplexities among,
 To the white centre of the sacred light.

Feed him with food of that rich fruit which grows
 On stems of splendid learning — dower him still
 With gifts of eloquence to vanquish those
 Who err ; — let soft persuasion change their will.

Hear, heavenly Sisters, hear ! oh, ye who know
The winds of wisdom's sea, the course to steer ;
Who light the flame that lightens all below,
And bring the spirits of the perfect there

Where the immortals are, when this life's fever
Is left behind as a dread gulf o'erpassed ;
And souls, like mariners, escaped for ever,
Throng on the happy foreland, saved at last.

So bring, high Muses ! open me the scroll
Where Truth is writ in characters of fire ;
Roll from my eyes the mists of life — oh ! roll,
That I may have my spirit's deep desire,

Discerning the divine in undivine,
The god in man — the life of me in death ;
Nor let dire powers pluck this soul of mine
From its most precious hope — to merge beneath

Deep floods of black oblivion, far from bliss,
From light, from wisdom — never let their doom
Shut my lost soul in such despair as this,
My soul that is so weary of the gloom !

246 TRANSLATIONS FROM THE GREEK POETS.

But hear and help, ye wise and shining Nine !

I yearn and strive towards your heavenly side ;

Teach me the secret of the mystic sign,

Give me the lore that guards, the words that guide.

FROM PROCLUS.



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